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ANECDOTES OF SIVANANDA

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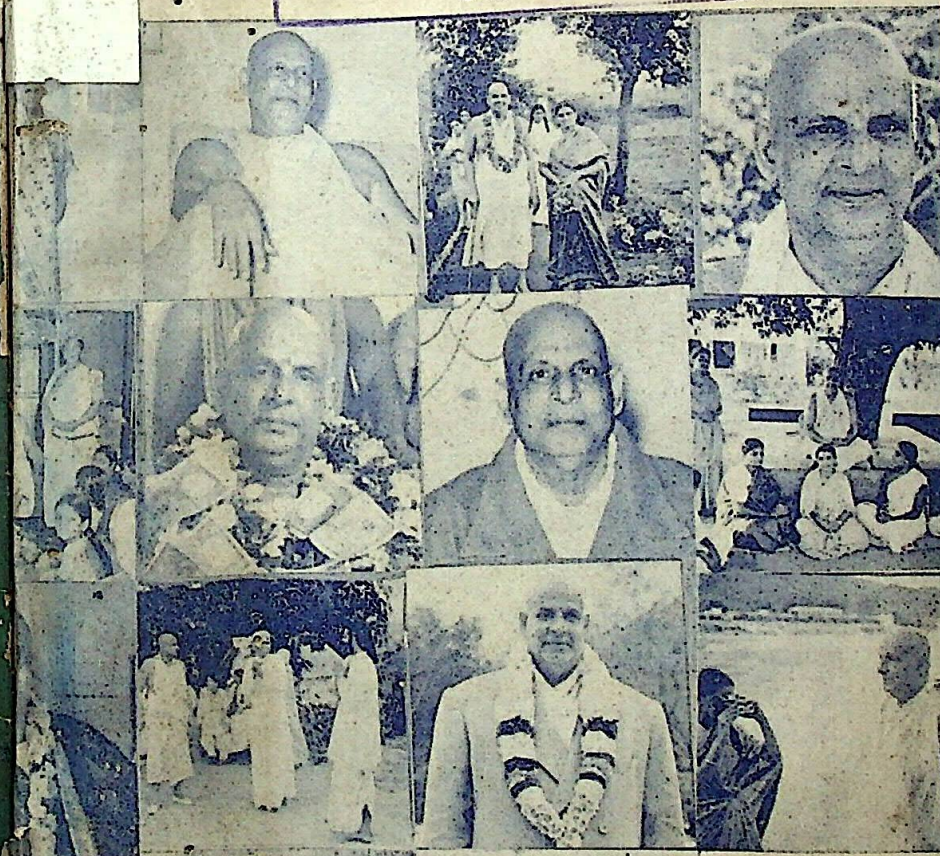

By

SRI SOBHA

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Platinum Jubilee Series No. 10

ANECDOTES

OF

SIVANANDA

BY

Sri Sivananda-Sobha, M.Ph., M.S.G.S., S.D.L.S.,

Master of Philosophy

Member, Sivananda Gyana Sabha,

Star of the Divine Life Society

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Published by

The Yoga-Vedanta Forest University
Ananda Kutir
P.O. Sivananda Nagar Rishikesh
Himalayas

Price] 1956 [*Rs.* 2

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Published by
Swami Chidananda
for
The Yoga-Vedanta Forest University

out of the
magnanimous donation of
SRI N. VENKATA SUBBA RAO,
Eluru

First Edition : September 1956.

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Printed at
The Y. V. Forest University Press,
P.O. Sivananda Nagar

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Bhumandaleswar Sri Swami Sivananda

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Easy accessibility to everybody, and a deep interest Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj takes in the plans and problems of everyone create incidents in his most eventful life. In Ananda Kutir, no one knows in the morning what wonders Swamiji will work in the afternoon; and he might by his magic touch of divinity transform the most commonplace item in the Ashram's routine-programme into a great event revealing everybody's talent and his own glory.

Sri Sobhaji, a devout disciple of the Master, has gathered together a few anecdotes from the life of Siva, published here. In preparing the compilation, she has endeavoured to see that the anecdotes do not merely narrate an incident in the life of the sage, nor record a dialogue, but bear a spiritual message that would inspire the reader.

—Publishers

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"जीवेत्स शरदः शतम्"

[या० वि० देवासकर, B.A , etc., Baroda.]

नवषष्टि सुवर्षाणि । येषां वै शुभजन्मनः ।
अद्य पूर्णानि नातानि । सुधन्यास्ते च योगिनः ॥१॥

अष्टमे दिवसे जाताः । मासे नाम्नि सितम्बरे ।
शिवानन्दश्च ते दिष्ट्या । वर्धन्ते विनयेन वै ॥२॥

× × × ×

वेदान्तस्य हि माहात्म्यं । वर्धितं येन भूतले ।
अभेदस्योपदेष्टा सः । "चिरं जीवेन्महामुनिः" ॥३॥

तपस्वी निर्ममः शांतः । शांतिदूतस्तथैव च ।
आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् । 'जीवेत्स शरदः शतम्' ॥४॥

शिवानन्दो ममाभदः । आनन्दो जगतः स च ।
सर्वानन्दः शिवानन्दः । ब्रह्मानन्देन नन्दति ॥६॥

× × × ×

गुरो लभस्व, शतवर्षमायुः ।
अभेदधर्मः प्रकटीकुरु त्वम् ॥
सर्वोदयार्थं भवतां सुजन्म ।
"तेन कृतार्था खलु हिंदभूमिः" ॥६॥

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LIFE, PHILOSOPHY & TEACHINGS OF SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

BY

SRI SIVANANDA-SOBHA

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PRAYER TO GURU BHAGAWAN

O Glorious Lord of Ananda Kutir!
You come to save us from misery
And help us cross the sea of sorrow.
Ever uncertain is here tomorrow.
Deceived are we at every step
By cunning Maya's poison-cup.
She comes to cheat in colourful forms.
We have to face terrible storms.
I need not tell, you know it all.
I want to enter thy divine Hall.

Alas! At every step I am forced to halt
I am a novice, it is not my fault.
Dark and desolate is the way
We cannot even for certain say
How far we have walked: what progress
Has been made by us—we cannot guess.

In this long and narrow path
Come to help me, Satgurunath.
Serious falls I've already had
Disgust has made me almost mad.
Come, come, my Saviour, kindly come:
Give me back mental equilibrium.
Listen to thy devotee's call:
Remove snares and pitfall.
Guide me on and lead the way
To where Thy Feet are, I humbly pray.

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THE DIVINE DESCENT

In South India's fair, fertile lands
Made rich in rice by Tamraparni's sands,
Is Pattamadai ; the lovely hamlet
On whose soil have played many a saint.
On the 8th September, eighteen-eighty-seven
On that very earth, the Lord of Heaven
Descended by His own sweet will.
Through the parents' heart passed a thrill
When they saw the baby's moon-like face—
Could he belong to human race ?

Hush : they whispered the Gods may be jealous;
We are blessed with a gift, the most precious.
But, soon the news spread like fire
To see the child came village entire
But ladies when they saw this loveliest lad
Spoke low : it is Divinity in man's mantle clad
No human child we saw before
So bewitching and bright—even old men swore
Yes, we are sure, we have been blessed
By an Avatara : and they caressed
And kissed in reverence the boy divine
And prayed " May happiness ever be thine !"

The pious parents showered wealth
On the poor for their child's health

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And long life and prosperity
Propitiated they many a deity.
Kuppuswamy, the babe was named.
For his generosity he was even then famed
His mother used to give him sweets
But he put them in the mouths of hungry beasts
Or, some poor friend, who could not get
Such dainties for enjoyment.
This loving heart which happily "gave"
Made every child his permanent slave.
The beasts too used to him hail
With loving movements of their tail.

At school he was the brightest boy
In studies and sports, the pride and joy
Of his teachers who loved him most
For his winning ways and general conduct.
He was very mischievous, but very good;—
The early marks of saint-hood.
The strongest and the most energetic
Wise and even diplomatic
Shyness was unknown to him.
He sang a song in Governor's welcome.

He loved to serve; so he chose to go
Into the medical line to ease the woe
Of the sick and the suffering, and those in pain
He knew not how to seek his own gain.
World saw him soon as a doctor of fame.
Daily he witnessed Death's fearful game.
Rose in his soft heart a storm of compassion—
How could he mortals' miseries lessen ?

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He published a journal 'Ambrosia'
And himself sailed to Malaya
He had heard of people's plight there
So the distance and difficulties he did not
care.

Served he there as no doctor could
All poor patients treat free he would
Even gave them money from his own pocket
For Milk and fruits and nourishing diet.

He cared not for day or night or noon
If the patient needs him, he must reach
there soon.
He sacrificed his food and sleep
And by a death-bed vigil would he keep,
Silently praying while medicine he poured
On pale, parched lips, quick growing cold
And such was the magic of this saintly surgeon
Death, defeated, had to run.

Thus did he serve to teach and train
Us—his children who try in vain
To see Him in temple, mosque or church
While the real God we leave in the lurch,
Who staggers and swoons and swears and signs,
But we stop not to soothe him busy with our
religious rites.

He saw the sin that had creeped in religion.
People worshipped statues, ignoring their
fellow-men.
No: he must serve on a wider scale.
He could not bear the woeful wail
Of ignored sufferer; it deafened him.

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He strained evey nerve to help, but the
malady lay hidden
In the core of humanity, it needed overhauling
The sleeping spirituality needed awakening.
Renunciation was the clue.
He had made his mind too
Leaving his all; leaving Malaya
He reached the hoary heights of Himalaya.
A Guru for him was waiting too
Though he needed him not, but details must
be attended to.

He has to set an ideal—an example.
So, the law of Guru-Parampara he must not trample.
Now was Dr. Kuppuswami made Swami Sivananda
And he settled at Rishikesh, the Holy Uttara-
khand.
He set himself to a life of self-unfoldment
The neighbour-monks looked in wonderment.

Without blanket, he would on bare ground
sleep
Bring rotties from Kshettar and in a corner
keep
He would soak the dried bread in Ganges
water
And eat the thing, thanking God, His Father.
A life of such austerity
Will never be seen by posterity.

A realised sage in him the world saw
The senior Sadhus looked at him with awe
And love and reverence, and whispered low :
He is no man ! Come let us go

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And bow to him and pay homage
To this God Supreme in body-cage.

An Ashram of its own accord
Grew round him—nay it was the will of the Lord
Day and night he wrote and wrote
Stories and songs of all sort;
Religion condensed in subtlest form
Thus saved spirituality from the raging storm
Of materialism which was gathering fast
On the Holy Land of India: it had cast
Its gloom: the shadow of death was falling firm
On the sacred ancient Sanatana Dharm.

Roared OM Siva the lion-saint
Fled in awe the beasts of materialism; the quaint.
The pity is that our ancient knowledge
Is not taught today in school or college
So we knew not what treasures lay hid
In our ancient lore-given to books morbid.

But he revealed it all in simple style
Accessible to all; he had no guile
Of cast and creed, colour and code
In His Ashram all can have abode.
So the glorious Divine Life Society
Was born in 1936 to help humanity.
Ever since it is serving still
And tries the ills of humanity to kill.
The Ashram abounds with many a saint
Blossomed Yogis without a taint.
Visitors from all parts of the world
Come to gather the gems that spread

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In the form of this saint's daily acts
Who has brought together all the sects.
Hatred he knows not; love is his very breath.
Prays he daily for the whole world's happiness and health.
In 1948 he opened the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Uuiversity
To guide in a scientific way the human community.
Over 200 books he has written
A wonder before by no one done
Each book a treasure—a masterpiece
A sure road to the realm of bliss and peace
The D.L.S. has become a mighty force
With 300 branches to end the wails and woes
Of weeping humanity, it kills and cures
The inner ills and lovingly lures
Sinner to a life of love and nobility
And leads on towards spirituality.

The Ashram stands on the loveliest spot
A heaven always—weather cold or hot
Mystery it is: how it is run
With no sure, settled income.
A wave of visitors is always there
And they are lovingly lodged without any fare
And served with food and milk and fruits.
All attention is paid to young recruits
Who come to join the Divine Life Army
For the highest noblest post of a Swami.
The Motherly love that they always get
From the Mighty Master makes me covet
Their lot: they are luckiest creatures on earth
Much good they must have done in past birth.

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Lucky is India the land ancient
To be blessed by this peerless saint.
He has once again honoured this earth
With his Descent—the Divine Birth.
O Gracious Lord in the form of Sri Gurudev
May you ever live our way to pave!
May we ever tread the path of perfection.
May we safely reach the destination.
Guided by you, our Guru and God.
Grant me this boon, O Merciful Lord.

At the Holiest Altar—the lotus-like feet of My Master, I humbly place this flower-offering, laden with love and devotion. Dust of thy feet—Sivananda-Sobha.

SIVANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY

A Glimpse of the Truth as shown by My Master

All life is one ;
Hate not anyone.
For you are contained in all.
In harming others lies your own fall.
Be not a fool, understand the law.
A sinner's death ever you saw ?
The same Atma dwells in the tiny ant.
Don't kill if give life you can't.
He is nearer to you than your breath.
He only remains after death.
He is the silent teacher.
No one than He is dearer.
He is not an object of knowledge.
He cannot be taught in a college

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By the learned boasting professors
Or by proud degrees' possessors.
He can be known through the majestic mountains.
Sing His glory the foaming fountains.
Reveal a little of His Majesty
The salty, serene and silent see,
The punctual sun and the moon.
The timely monsoon.
They speak of His Omnipotence.
His powers are immense.
For Him there is no definition.
He can be known through the path of negation.

Vairagya means non-attachment,
Not temporary but permanent.
Vairagya and Abhyasa go side by side.
They turn inward one's mind.

Vairagya born of discrimination
Alone leads to the destination.
That born of a quarrel with your wife
Won't help you in your spiritual life.

Check your mind, let it not wander.
It will much of thy energy squander
On sensual objects : be alert.
Awake, thy royal right assert.

The origin of desire is ignorance.
To kill desire take pains immense.
Dispassion comes of meditation.
It leads on to renunciation.

Life is God in expression.
Life is fight for perfection.

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Death is only an aspect of life.
It leads to a newer and fresher life.
It is a glorious prize, eternal trophy.
It is the immediate cause of philosophy.

Birth and death both are false.
Play of mind, Maya's dance;
To delude us all, so beware.
Fall not in her hidden snare.

Ever pure and ever eternal
Thou art Atma, not this frame external.
Transcend Maya, by destroying mind,
Nothing in the world will you bind.

Life is continuous, it never dies.
It is a change of form, cognise!
The flower may fall; the shade may fade.
But its fragrance does ever pervade
The ether; it is eternal
It may transform in another kernal.

Rejoice in the Atma
Go beyond three Gunas.
Every effect has a cause,
Without a reason sorrow never falls.
As you sow, so you reap;
Ever this in mind keep.

Root out the cause of all evil, I.
It seems difficult; but just try.
If you reflect and meditate,
You will the body-idea hate.

Cause of birth and death is craving
By desire the way you are paving

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For rebirth, so crave only for God
You shall attain the feet of the Lord.
Discussion leads only to confusion
If you seek the Eternal union
Seek the essence bother not
About things which exist not.
You will not be helped by reason and logic.
It is like wasting time in fun and frolic.
Reason can work within time-space
But Atma is beyond its gaze.
Atma can be known through intuition.
Develop intuition through meditation,
So grasp the Truth. Don't after shadow run
Don't bother about family of a barren
woman's son.

HIS IMMORTAL TEACHINGS

In his own words

O children of Immortality!
Sons of Light, heirs of Divinity.
Open your eyes, sleep no more.
Human birth is hard to secure
Waste it not in food and sleep
And other enjoyments low and cheap.
The goal of life is Self-realisation.
So listen to my friendly narration.
The sensual pleasures are pains in disguise.
They are only cunning Maya's spies
To dupe and deceive you; so don't be a fool.
In the desert called world you will find no
shade—cosy and cool

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It is a sea of sorrow mark my word.
'Duhkhalayam,' termed it Lord Krishna have
you not heard?
So renounce the world and realise the Self.
But you can reach the goal by remaining in
the world itself
If you remain mentally unattached
Work, but renounce fruit in the Lord's hand.
You can practise Sadhana side by side.
Have a Guru—He will guide
You—on towards the goal
And give you knowledge of the soul.
You need a teacher for every science
So you must have guidance
For this highest learning Brahma-Vidya.
All saints resorted to Guru-Parampara.

Get up at 4 a.m. Brahmamuhurta.
For meditation this time is best
So waste it not in sleep and snore
Get up alert and loudly roar
OM, the secret sacred breath of Brahma
The fiercest foe of Tamo-Guna.
Now you shall feel fresh and pure
Sit in Padmasan and lure
The mischievous mind towards Lord's feet.
It will be hard at first, but you must defeat
This thy foe by tact and wisdom
You have to reach your Father's kingdom.

You are an heir to the realm of peace and bliss
So you should on no account miss
This precious chance given by Him.

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Wait not for old age when your sight grows dim
What can you do in that weak state?
Come, quick, before it is too late.

No; don't bring your intellect here.
Faith alone will give you inner vision clear.
If you go to the spiritual market
Buy intuition and sell intellect.
Read spiritual books; have Satsang.
Avoid cinema and idle gossiping.
Time is precious, waste it not
In novel-reading and hotel restaurant.

Be strict vegetarian, observe celibacy.
This is spiritual life's A.B.C.
Without it there can be no election
For the pure path of prayer and perfection.
Speak truth; injure no one
In thought, word and action.
Bear insult, bear injury.
Do daily Atmic enquiry.
Self-analysis and introspection
Will lead you on towards perfection.

Serve your seniors, the sick and the saint.
Lead a tough life of self-restraint.
Shun luxuries; be charitable.
Guest is God—be hospitable.
Daily practise Yogasan; it will give you wonderful health.
Acquire the "Four", have dispassion, it's the sacred spiritual wealth.

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Better alone than bad company.
A selfish friend is the worst enemy.
In solitude and sweet silence.
You will find joy immense.
Two hour's Mouna is necessary.
Use the time in Japa and inner enquiry.
Mouna means silence of the mind.
Not mere control of the organ of talking.
Pranayama is the science of breath.
It will give you wonderful health,
Long life, vigour and vitality,
Key to the realms of spirituality.

Have no pride of erudition.
Degrees lead to degradation,
If they make you vain, empty and rude.
Have always humble attitude
B. A. means bow to all : M. A. means mix with all.
With such noble thoughts you can never fall.

Always have a clear conscience.
Never adopt the way of vengeance.
Be good ; do good—this is enough
If you practise it you can always laugh.

Be kind, be compassionate.
Never harm, never hate.
Develop pure cosmic love.
You will be loved by angels above.

Have equal and broad vision.
The same God dwells in a prince and a peon
Serve, love, give, meditate ;
Realisation is the next state.

xx

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Be cheerful always.
Lightly will pass all your days.
Cultivate adaptability.
You shall never face difficulty.

Develop the power of endurance.
You shall have " Atmic-Bal " immense.
Eradicate self-justification.
You shall never see humiliation.

Control anger by love.
You shall always soar above.
Lead a well-regulated life.
If you can, avoid a wife.

Stick to one Guru, repeatedly I tell.
If you dig at many places you can't get a well.
Do regular Kirtan ; there is great power in Nam.
Never waste a single breath ; always utter Ram.

Prayer works wonders ; of this there is no doubt
To a humble devotee had to bow sages stout.
Be fiery in your determination.
It's the first requisite for realisation.

A store of strength is hidden in you : draw it from within
Never look in despair like a weakling.
Kill the ego, thy fiercest foe
Destroy it soon, let it not grow.

No more wandering ; sit apart.
Search Him inside your heart.
Remove the veil and look within
You shall find bliss therein.

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TO THE FELLOW TRAVELLER

Whither friend running so fast ?
Every now and then you cast
A look behind and sideways glance
And then you run, faster advance.

Follows thee someone or are you afraid ?
Of the growing dark and the shades on the glade ?
Nay, slowly pace ; it is no use running.
You may stumble and fall ; Maya is cunning
She dupes us all by her tricks and traps,
She is jealous of our progress perhaps.
While running fast you may not see

Some snares which may hidden be.
So better it is to walk alert
And watchful, you will reach cert
The goal : and, friend, have a guide, too.
Sivananda gives you hope, hints and clue,
Removes pitfalls and snares as well.
You cannot fall if you thus travel.

TO THE CAPITAL OF MY GURUDEV

The lovely land of saints and sages,
The greatest centre of pilgrimages,
The capital of my Gurudev
The way to heaven you point and pave.

Nourished are you by Mother Ganges,
Sheltered by Himalayan ranges,
Saturated with sacred vibrations
Is thy ether : salutations

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To thee I send, Oh Best of Towns !
Thou art ever echoing with sacred sounds
Of Kirtan, conch and temple-bells—
These divine Dhwanis far excell

The rotten unhealthy cinema songs
I wonder why any man longs.
To hear these senseless silly tunes
Wasting the Lord's best of boons.*

Rishikesh—O Home of Hermits !
To rest in thy lap me permit.
By the crazy charm of big cities—
To those deluded a thousand pities.

I love thy calm and quiet bosom
In the breast of Ganga thy lights illumine.
Sacred is thy air; holy thy dust
Thy bounds admit not anger greed and lust.

God Himself has blessed thee
With the touch of His Holy Lotus-Feet.
Saint Sivananda of Ananda Kutir
Sanctifies thy soil: all glory to thee.

A REQUEST

Life of my soul, Joy of my heart.
Drag along this body-cart
Along the road that you think best
For a while let me rest
In thy loving lap divine.
Weary and wounded limbs are mine
Thorny bushes of wild desire

---

* human birth

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Have badly bruised my frame entire
I am feeling dizzy ; my head reels
In surrender before you I kneel.
My vision fails ; I find no way.
Dark like night is even my day.
Give me, Gurudev, a ray of light.
On thy love I have some right.
Neglect me not, though I am guilty.
Mother hates not child though it be filthy.
My soul is starving for thy love.
Call me in thy realms above.

THE SACRED CONVICTION

If this be thy will that I must live apart
Away from thy lotus-feet, my heart
Must break to pieces, though I must sub nit
To thy will supreme. But, pray, permit
Me to shed a few holy tears
At thy feet, for I have great fears
If I give not vent to my sorrow great
My heart undoubtedly will break.
Give me courage if you give this grief
By thy grace perhaps I may reef
Towards the goal with steadied step
Though I have doubts, I am so upset
Because of thy bitter separation,
I wonder if I'll reach the destination—
But still I am sure you are always with me
Thy love can never forsake me.
Thy unseen hand is ever on my head.
You shall make the thorns the roses' bed.

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SIVANANDA'S LETTERS TO SOBHA

20-8-'55

1. THE SOLE QUALIFICATION

Sri Sivananda-Sobha.

Adorable, Immortal Atman.

Om Namo Narayanaya.

Your kind letter has touched the core of my heart. Every line breathes the spirit of devotion.

In the spiritual field, the disciple adds the Guru's name before his or her name. Therefore, you are Sivananda-Sobha. He is Sivananda-Tankha. Ravi is Sivananda-Ravi. Sasi is Sivananda-Sasi.

Neither art nor science, nor erudition is necessary to approach God or realise God. What is wanted is a pure heart, with love and devotion to God, a heart resolutely determined to apply itself to Him alone, for His sake alone, and to love Him alone. This you possess, assuredly in a full measure. Your Gita-recitation is still ringing in my ears.

May Lord bless you, Patidev and children.

Thy own Self,

Om Tat Sat. Sivananda.

2. THE SECRET OF INNER CULTURE

12-7-56

Sri Sivananda-Sobha,

Bareilly.

Thy kind letter.

Your offering, word and breath is most precious.

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It is like "Atma Tvam Girija Matih" Stotra of Sri Sankaracharya.

God is the awareness in all beings. God is life. Life is one and indivisible. The source of all knowledge is within you.

Ceaselessly strive to strengthen your spiritual Samskaras or spiritual force through aspiration, dispassion, discrimination and meditation and weaken the resistance of instincts and senses.

The serpents of senses which are hissing again and again should be slain by the rod of firm discrimination.

May Lord bless you and family.

May He remove all obstacles in the spiritual path.

Thy own Atma,

Om Tat Sat. Swami Sivananda

3. LOVE IS GOD

27.1.56

Sri Sivananda-Sobha.

Bareilly.

Adorable Immortal Atman,

Om Namo Narayanaya.

Thy kind letter and Guru Poornima offering drenched with the drops of devotion wet with Bhakti.

Your soul is here. I know it. I feel it.

I have duly accepted thy homage and devotion. The foot-stool gives me support. Thou art blessed indeed. Mercy is the highest virtue; forgiveness is the highest power; Knowledge of the Atma is the highest knowledge; there is nothing higher than Truth.

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Love is a positive force. It has creative power. It heals, comforts and protects. All other things, pass away; but love alone remains for ever. Love is God.

God is awareness, pure consciousness.

Mineness is death. Freedom from mineness is Immortality or Life eternal.

May you attain Kaivalya. May Lord bless you, Patidev and children and all.

May Brahma Vidya Gurus protect and illumine you on this Gurupoornima day.

OM TAT SAT.

Thy Own Self,
Sivananda.

4. THE TRUTH ABOUT LIFE

5th August 1956

Sri Sivananda Sobha,
BAREILLY

Glorious, Immortal Atman,

OM Namo Narayanaya.

Thy kind letter.

Your poems "Philosophy & Teachings" are simply beautiful. You are more a poet than a writer. Your poems are spontaneous and without effort. They are outpourings of the heart.

Yes, you can come on September 8th. Cordial greetings.

Devotion breathes in every line of your letters. Thou art blessed indeed. I have sent to you some copies of your book. How many copies more do you want?

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The immanent God is the innermost Core of Reality.

Life is education. Education is life.

God is the Father and we are all His Children.

Greatness lies in the feeling and in the recognition of the equality with all.

Atma is the same in all. It is neither high nor low.

Goodness is to be coveted and honoured wherever it is found.

May Lord bless you and family, Sri Sobhaji.

Herewith Guru Poornima Prasad.

OM TAT SAT.

Thy own Atman,
Sivananda.

5. THE AXE TO ROOT OUT SAMSARA

28-9-56.

Sri Sivananda-Sobha.
Om Namo Narayanaya.
Glorious Immortal Atman,

Thy kind letters and Hindi poems.

The whole letter breathes Nivritti, Vairagya and self-surrender. This is a grand and sublime ideal. This is due to the divine grace. The more the surrender, the more the divine grace. That is the divine law. Sobha is blessed.

Take care of your health so as to be able to dedicate yourself to others.

Cut asunder the bond of desires through the destruction of Sankalpa (thought, imagination).

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In the absence of objects this little "I" does not exist. Or these objects do not exist in the absence of "I".

With the annihilation of "I" the body will perish like a tree felled to its root.

The whole aim of Sadhana or spiritual practices and study of scriptures is the annihilation of egoism-cum-delusion and the attainment of knowledge of Atma.

May you be established in your own Swaroopa or Satchidananda Atma !

Om Tat Sat

Thy own Atman,
Sivananda.

6. FREEDOM FROM MAYA

25-9-56.

Sri Sivananda-Sobha,
Bareilly.

Om Namo Narayanaya.

Glorious Immortal Atman,

I am in due receipt of your letter and the poems. The poems are superb.

A Sage lacks nothing. He is extremely contented with the Essence which is all-full. Become a Sage, Sobha.

Indian culture is the eternal storehouse of human aspirations. It is ever sublime and lofty. Become an embodiment of Indian Culture, Sobha.

One fears not death who has realised Para Brahman, who is serene, ageless, self-luminous,

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deathless, firm, Immortal and self-existent. Realise Para Brahman and become fearless and immortal, Sobha.

If there is suffering in this world, there must be a way out. This way is divine life, viz., Japa, Kirtan, Satsang, study, prayer, discipline, self-restraint and meditation. Lead the Life Divine and get out of this Maya's net, Sobha.

May Lord bless you, Sobha and all,

Om Tat Sat

Thy own Atman,
Sivananda.

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❀ श्री शिवानन्दपञ्चकम् ❀

येषां कल्हारगन्धप्रसृमरयशसा भारतं सुप्रसिद्धम्
तेषामप्यध्ययनाम्नामतिविपुलधियां वंशराकाशशांकः
श्रीमच्छ्रीवासुदेवामलपदयुगलीपद्मभृंगायमाणो
वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यः स जयति सुतरां श्रीशिवानन्दयोगी

सम्पद्वीर्यप्रतापप्रगुणितयशसः सन्ति केचित् धरायाम
लोकक्षेमाभिवृद्ध्यै त इह न निपुणास्त्वेति लोकापवादः
तत् सर्वं संप्रमार्ष्टुं विमलमुपदिशन् चर्यया त्यागमार्गम
नैष्कर्म्यं गाहमानः स जयति सुतरां श्रीशिवानन्दयोगी

अंब! श्रीभारतक्ष्मे! जय! जय! सकलानन्दसम्पद्विधात्री
युष्मत्सन्तानसन्तानितममृतमयं ज्ञानमद्यापि भाति
न स्यादन्तर्हितं दुर्जनभटनिवहैर्जातुचित् तत्र लक्ष्यम
दृष्ट्वान्तं योगविद्यावितरणनिपुणः श्रीशिवानन्दयोगी

श्रीवेदव्यासमुख्याः कविकुलमणयो यत्र, निर्धूतपापाः
सानन्दं, साश्रुपातं हरिचरणमिलत्भक्तिमाध्वीं निपीय
सान्तर्मोदं विजह्रुः सकलशुभमये तद्धृषीकेशदेशे-
योगक्षेमं वितन्वन् स जयति सुतरां श्रीशिवानन्दयोगी

श्रीमद्धैमाद्रिसानौ, कलकलविगलज्जह्नुकन्यातटान्ते
वासं कुर्वन् विशुद्धाशयशुभमतिभिः स्वीयशिष्यैस्समेतः
सर्वं ब्रह्मेति बुद्ध्या शिशुवदविरतं निष्कलंकस्वभावः
सान्द्रानन्दाब्धिमग्नः स जयति सुतरां श्रीशिवानन्दयोगी

इति पांगप्पार केशवपिल्ल (कश्चित् स्वामिभक्तः)
स्यानन्दूरपुरम्

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THE DONOR

N. Venkata Subba Rao Garu

Sivananda-Pada Sevak

(By Sri Swami Sreenivasananda Saraswathi)

A word from Guru Bhagawan is really a word from God for Sri N. Venkata Subbha Rao Garu, B.A., President of the Divine Life Society Branch, Eluru. He is simple, unassuming and frank in every detail of his Vanaprastha life. The moment a thought issues forth from Guru Bhagawan, Sri Subbha Rao immediately accomplishes it. That is why Gurudev loves him so much. That is why Gurudev calls him "Niradambra Swami and wrote to him once "You are the Kaustubha Gem right at the centre of my heart". In a letter written personally in his own hand, Sri Gurudev has remarked: "You have become King of Andhra, O Adhyatmic Hero."

Sri Subba Rao Garu is the translator, editor and compiler of books like "Narada Bhakti Sutras", "Conquest of Anger", "Divya Jeevanamu';, "Sarva Gita Sara". "Samanvaya Yoga", etc. He has brought out all these books in a spirit of selfless service to the cause of Divine Life and as a part of the Jnana Yajna that Gurudev has been carrying on. He is spurred on by a zeal that the people of the Andhra should receive Gurudev's Message and attain the Goal of Life. Besides the above books, he has also published quite a number of leaflets containing the teachings of Sri Gurudev.

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THE DONOR

Sri N. Venkata Subba Rao, S.D.L.S.,
Eluru.

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SIVANANDA-SOBHA

Her maiden name was Daya; and her husband re-christened her "Sobha"; and Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj conferred the perfix of his own name on hers The three together correctly portray her personality. By nature compassoinate and loving, she, like Gurudev, dispels pain and grief by her mere presence. Her smiles put sorrow to shame. Resplendent Sobha's radiant wisdom wafts righteous optimism around her.

Who doesn't recognise these are some of the great qualities that form part of the divine personality of our Gurudev, Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj? That is what makes one who is acquainted with Sri Sobha feel that she is truly, Sivananda-Sobha (the resplendence of Sivananda)

Sobha belongs to Swami Sivananda's Gotra (Bharadwaja Gotra), and so partakes of his native characteristics like generosity, nobility, magnanimity, sincerity and intense dynamic activity. No one except perhaps Swamiji's Private Secretary (Satchidanandaji) has been able to emulate Sri Swamiji's D.I.N. example, as Sri Sobha has done. She simply *can't* postpone a thing for the morrow: every good action must be done the moment the thought arises in the mind or the opportunity opens itself before her. The miracle of mind-control is witnessed in Gurudev's daily life: the hours set apart for writing books must be utilised for that purpose—and the fount of inspiration is unfailing Similar has been the case with Sri Sobha: and it was witnessed in the way she wrote this book.

In another very important respect she shines as the resplendence of Sri Gurudev: that is in the Yogic poise she maintains while being engaged in her Vyavaharic duties and the remarkable impersonal devotion she has to her worldly duties. In her devotion to her husband, she is an ideal Pativrata, a spiritual counterpart and help-mate; in her attitude towards her children she is an ideal divine mother giving them the milk of her spiritual wisdom. She is there in the world, but is not of it: she takes a deep interest in everything but is at heart away from things mundane. The bee of her heart ever hovers around the lotus-feet of Sri Gurudev, Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Her writings amply bear witness to her supreme devotion to the Master.

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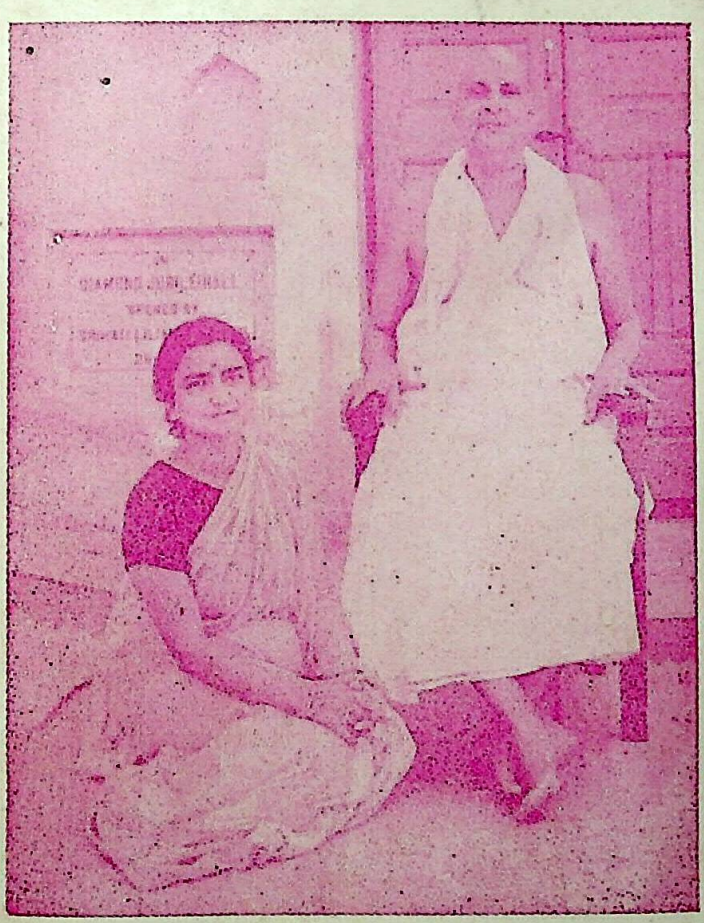

Sri Sobha with Sri Gurudev

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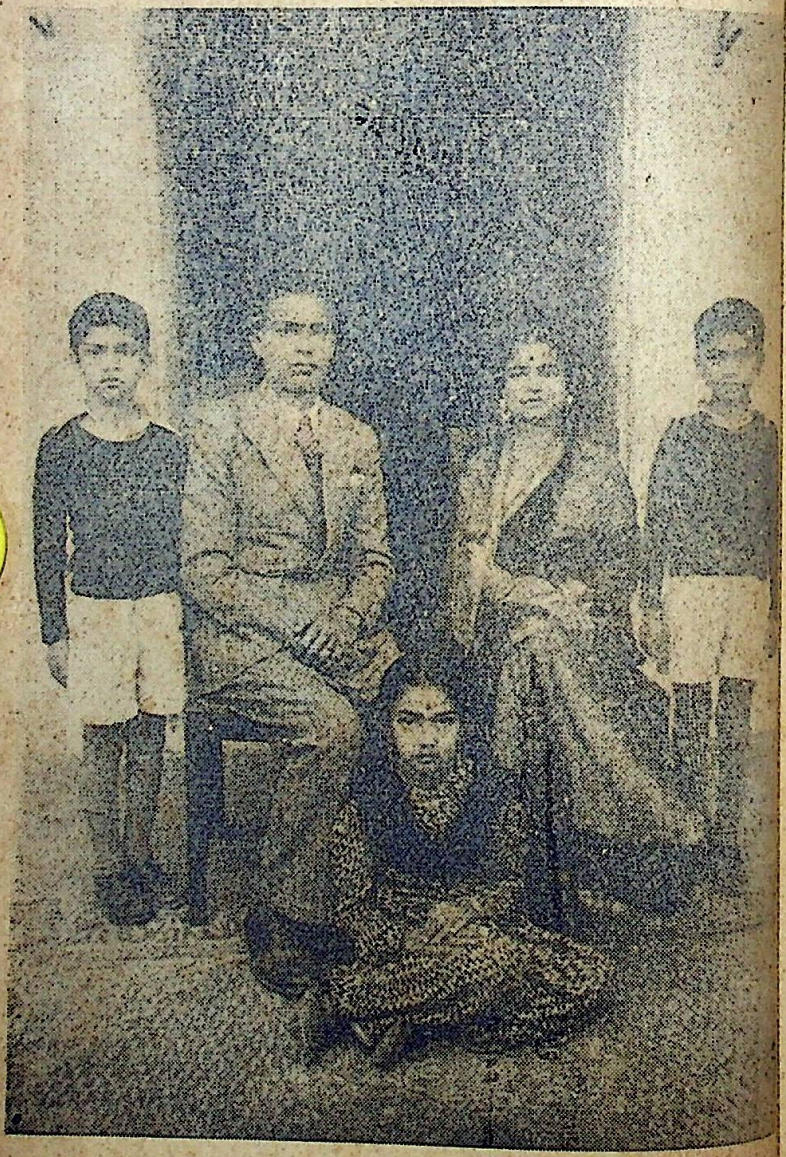

Sri S.N. Tankha, Sri Sobha and their children.

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The whole of the Andhra State has become "Sivanandamayam". Thanks to the services of Sri Subba Rao Garu. This is the greatest service, the greatest Yoga, the highest worship. Besides flooding the Andhra State with Sivananda-literature in Telugu, he has also donated for the printing and publication of this priceless volume of the ANECDOTES OF SIVANANDA. Glorious is Sri Subba Raoji's heart ! May God bless him with health, and long life : May Guru Bhagavan's choicest blessings be with him

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MY LIFE

I was born in the year "Tarana" (Telugu) corresponding to 1884. I am now 72 years old. I belong to Brahmin Niyogi family. My father's name is Venkata Ramanayya Garu and mother's name is Annapurnamma Garu. I have a younger brother named Venkateswara Rao who retired from District Board services and lives at Eluru.

I was matriculated at the Church Mission High School (now taken up by the Municipality), Eluru, in the year 1899. In that very year both my father and my mother passed away. I was then 15 years old and I had to stand on my own legs, as I had practically very little paternal property. My father served only as a clerk under a merchant. But as I got a scholarship from the Noble College, Masulipatam, I joined F.A. class in that College. I was married when I was 12 years old; and during the course of my college career my wife came to me and she became sick on account of domestic worries, I could not pay much attention to my studies and so I could not get through the examination. I had to maintain my family and I joined the Revenue Department as a clerk in the Taluk Office, Rajahmundry on a monthly salary of Rs. 15. I was at Rajahmundry for 2 years 1902 and 1903. In 1903 I passed F.A. privately. I continued my service and while I was a Revenue Inspector, I went up for B.A.

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Degree Examination as a private canditate. By God's Grace, I succeeded and got my degree in 1911, with History and Economics as my optional subjects. I have to look after my younger brother. He did not pay much attention to his studies. I got him married and secured for him an appointment in the District Board.

I served in the revenue Department for nearly 20 years. I worked in the Districts of Krishna, Guntur, West Godavari and East Godavari. While working as a sub-magistrate in the year 1922, I had some misunderstandings with my superior officer and I resigned my appointment. Afterwards for seven years I was idle and lived in a village called Mogalthurru learnt Hindi and was teaching some boys. Being rather of a devotional temperament, I spent some time in Japa, etc. Again from 1929 to 1935 I was Manager of some estates. From 1935 to 1942 I was a Dewan of another estate. These estates lie in the East and the West Godavari districts. From 1942 I retired from active service and have been spending my time in giving private tuition to boys reading from 1st form to the S.S.L.C. class.

I have only one daughter living. She is now aged about 50. She has five sons and one daughter. Her husband died in 1947 and ever since then she has been with me, with her minor sons. They have some property and I am looking after that. I adopted my second grandson. Thus, I have now grandchildren and great grandchildren also.

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From the beginning I have been a devotee of Sri Rama. For more than two decades I have been writing the Likhita Japa of "Sree Rama". I finished three crores and deposited it in the temple at Badrachalam. For some years past I have been intersted in the writings of H H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and I used to read his spiritual lessons published in "My Magazine" of Madras. It was only in 1953 that I had direct contact with Swamiji, through correspondence, and was strictly following his directions in the spiritual field by doing Sadhana and writing the spiritual diary prescribed by him. Guru Purnima Day in 1955 was an eventful and happy day for me. For, on that day I had direct initiation from Swamiji. I stayed at Sivananda Nagar for a week and returned home.

I am now an instrument in the hands of God and my Guru; and I follow their instructions to the best of my ability.

Nanduri Venkata Subba Rao

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PREFACE

Asked Arjuna of the Lord:

Sthita-Prajnasya Kaa Bhasha Samadhisthasya Keshava
Sthita-dheeh kim Prabhasheta Kimaaseeta vrajeta kim.

"How does a man of equilibrium (a Self-realised sage) talk, sit, speak and move?", signifying that every action, every movement, every word spoken by the Self-realised sage—a Yogi of poise—is important.

He has a different attitude to life, which is reflected in a subtle way in all his thoughts, words and deeds. So, the day-to-day life of a saint provides great, inspiring lessons for a sincere Sadhaka. It is for this reason that the soul-elevating instances from the life of the greatest saint of today—Swami Sivananda—has been recorded here.

The best way of learning Yoga is not through books; but by a close and careful study of a saint's everyday activities. A true saint teaches not through precepts but by example; for he knows:—

Yad yad acharati sreshthah tat tadeva itaro janah.

(whatever the saint among men does, that the masses follow). This is a universal truth: and it is said the supreme glory of a saint's life lies in the fact that they

...departing, leave behind them
Footprints on the sands of time...

Extremely interesting and instructive, as this great Saint's Lilas are, they pave the way for us—an illumined way of right living and right thinking.

—*Sivananda-Sobha*

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CHAPTER ONE

THE DIVINE LIFE

1 THE DIVINE LIFE

14th June 1948

Sri R.R., M.A., LL.B. introduced to Siva his friend, a retired Colonel, who had held the post of the Minister of State. He asked Siva; "How to lead the Divine Life?"

"Siva replied. Practise meditation. Do Japa. Get up at 4 a.m. All these I have given in my 20 instructions." (Siva handed a copy of the leaflet to the Colonel).

"All these I know, Swamiji!"

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"That is all, the rest lies in practice."

"I have been practising in my own way. But I have not actually experienced the Anand that is said to flow from such practices." "You must be regular in your practices and go on till you reach your goal—even if it takes several births."

"Ah that is it!" I have not been regular at all, Swamiji. I shall try now."

"You must devote your entire time to Sadhana as you are retired now."

"Unfortunately, Swamiji, I am still leading the old way of life. I retired on a pension which was my full pay!"

"That is extraordinary. It is all due to God's grace You must do a lot of charity. You must reduce your expenses. So long you have supported a small family. Now you must expand and treat all poor people as members of your family."

"That too I have not done so far because my expenses have remained the same as they were before I retired, but in a way I am doing charity also. I am paying a number of servants etc."

"No, no, that is not charity. How much money can you give to the lepers on the roadside? Every man is generous to himself. You must lead a life of seclusion and spend at least half your pension, if not the full amount in charity. Then you will experience the bliss that comes out of Lord's grace." Thus the noble saint guides one and all and shows every man the road to Divine Life.

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2. YOGA—HOW MANY YEARS COURSE ?

12th Nov. 1949.

Two European (Swiss) tourists came today to have Siva's Darshan. They had noticed on the road leading to the temple a big signboard bearing the words "YOGA-VEDANTA FOREST UNIVERSITY." They had also seen the University's weekly magazine. The first question that came to their lips when they saw Siva was : "How long does it take one to complete the Forest University course on Yoga and Vedanta ?" Quick was Siva's reply : "A life-time." "What !" "Yes : if you are to pass the final test of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, which is Self-realization, you have to dedicate your life to the study and practice of Yoga and Vedanta. It won't do just to read a few books, and vomit the knowledge on your answer-papers at the examination and feel mightily pleased with yourself thinking 'I am a great Yogi now.' Yoga and Vedanta should become part and parcel of your very being. You should not only know intellectually what Vedanta says, but you should actually feel and realize for yourself the truth about which Yoga and Vedanta preach." "What a great difference between the Western universities and the westernised Indian universities, and this one here !" thought the Europeans and went their way, bowing in humility before the great sage.

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3 SIVA SURPRISES !

8th Sept. 1948

The morning Sadhana class was in progress. Mental Japa and meditation had finished. Krishnanandaji had led the audience in reciting Shanti Path and Guru Stotras and Sridharji was talking on Sadhana. Outside it was still dark. Quietly Siva stepped in through a side-door. No one expected him, so no one noticed. Quietly he took a back-bench seat—as one of the members of the audience intently listening to Sridharji's lecture ! The entire gathering literally sat up and rubbed their eyes when this magnificent personality stood up and roared, "OM OM OM. ' at the end of Sridharji's talk.

In the austere silence people were staring at the saint who had thus surprised them. Then he led the audience into one of His most popular and instructive Kirtans : "God is Truth—Govinda ; God is love—Govinda ; speak the truth—Govinda ; serve all and love all—Govinda." And followed a shower of nectar : "The Shruti declares '*Sarvam Khalu idam Brahma*, all indeed is Brahma. There is no such thing as diversity." This is your essential Nature. When Avidya is removed you shine as the Akhanda Paripoorna, Satchidananda. In reality you are undivided, one, the essence. You falsely imagine that you have hands, feet, eyes, mouth. Remember this : "Thou art That ;" TAT TWAM ASI. *A thrill passed through the assembled gathering when the Saint-lion roared on "Thou art That"*. This is the gist of Vedanta.

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This is the most powerful remedy for all ills. This is what the Sages have taught in the Upanishads.

"May the blessings of Sankaracharya, Lord Dattatreya and the Brahma Kumaras be upon you all! May you all shine as Jivanmuktas in this very birth"

It was a rare sight to see and hear this God on earth speak to his children in unbounded love—that was just overflowing, breaking all the barriers of earth. The listeners were spell-bound—bathed and refreshed in this compassionate shower of nectar. They experienced a bliss and ecstasy unknown in earthly regions.

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CHAPTER TWO
THE VEDANTIC VIEW

4. AVERAGE ECONOMY

23rd DECEMBER, 1949

A strong smell of Atta being fired in ghee invaded the office. "Today there is a feast?" enquired Siva. ..." Yes, Swamiji, Lakshmi-havan on behalf of Pannalalji is being conducted today. There is a feast also." "Very good, we are saying 'no money' and feasts go on unhampered. This is also one method of economy. One day take Uppuma and coffee, another day take cold rice, fast on the third

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day. Now on an average you have practised economy!" There was great laughter in the whole office. The Mahayogi is a Mahabhogi too! Few people would be prepared for Mahatyaga. To remain mentally aloof during Bhoga too, and to be conscious of the fact that in a couple of days one would be a Mahatyagi, even while being a Mahabhogi is possible only in the case of a Mahayogi. Such is Siva indeed!

Chamanlalji has sent 46 woollen blankets. Siva said "You should take a blanket if you have two blankets already. You should have one of these too. Don't be shy! Real renunciation consists in practising actual possessionless state as long as it is necessary for the mind to 'adjust itself' to all conditions. Vairagya should not be mistaken for torturing the body unnecessarily. Formerly I used to give away all new Kambals presented to me by devotees; I would myself sleep on the floor and use only gunny. Now I have a number of Kambals in my Kutir. I have to use one for the head, one for the legs and so on! But I am collecting them only to give away. Every time I ask myself, "Will you part with these?" And there is the reply from within, "Yes, any moment these may be given away." "When you need a thing, use it, but have the Bhav that it is the Lord within that uses it. *Nimitta Bhav.* then you will be affected by nothing. You will be able to renounce everything in the twinkling of an eye." This should be the attitude of a true Sadhaka.

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5. VEDANTIC ETHICS

6th JUNE, 1948

Swami Sivananda believes in the golden medium. Neither a life of luxuries, nor one of extreme austerities. A Sadhak should not crave for anything but he should accept with indifference whatever comes to him. Today when a young disciple, placed on the saint's table a packet of sweetmeats (the offering of a visitor), he wanted to give to the young Swami the lion's share, but the disciple full of Vairagya was not inclined to accept it, and then came the golden advice: "Neither want nor give up—that should be the attitude of a Vedantin. He should not say: 'I have given up salt. I have given up sugar,' —no, not even 'I have given up the world.' He should be supremely indifferent. He should rest in His own Swaroopa, and realise the unity of existence. He should see Brahman alone in everything and everywhere."

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6. SAINTLY DETACHMENT

21st OCTOBER, 1948

Siva was on His morning rounds. An aged Sadhu was sick and Siva was in front of the Sadhu's Kutir. A companion of the Sadhu informed Siva of the latters' condition and suggested that the patient's Poorvashram relatives should be contacted. "No, no, he himself would not like it. What has he got to do with those people? He is dead to them. What does it matter if he gives up the body now? We will consign his body to the Ganges." The compassionate companion was worried. Siva quickly relieved the companion's misery. "After all the body has to perish one day. We should always look to the welfare of the inner Atma. The Atma is imperishable. Contact with the erstwhile relatives will soil the purity of the soul. A last minute attachment might create impressions which might bring about a rebirth." So the saint decided that the relatives should not come. The soul is saved thereby. If the body dies it can be offered to the Ganges with Maha Mantra-Kirtan. After a few minutes' silence, Siva added: "Do not worry yourselves. He will be alright soon." And the aged Sadhu was perfectly alright in a few days. Siva too, while he said all these things with full of detachment, was taking the greatest interest in the quick recovery of the patient. This is the true spirit of detachment as taught by Lord Krihna. Work we must, but fruit lies in His Hands, so we must be indifferent to it.

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7. LOSS IS ALSO GAIN

2nd JULY, 1948

The case of a bookseller (without a shop !), who had taken out a consignment of Siva's books worth Rs. 600/- had not even intimated his whereabouts to the Society for years.....was brought to the saint's notice by the Secretary. Quick came the gems of wisdom from the sage: "What are six hundred rupees before the evolution of one single individual soul ? I shall not be sorry if the consignee does not pay even a pie for the six-hundred-rupee-worth of books we sent him. What will he do with the books ? They are not edibles. He might sell them at one anna per copy at the Moore Market or even give them free. In any case they will go round. At least one man's eyes will be opened and he will begin to do Japa. I am satisfied. God will give us money when He thinks fit. We should not consider this a loss." With winks and a sarcastic smile he further added : "so you have all been deceived by this polished cheat. It is a wonder how you entrusted such a large consignment to a stranger ! " and he was told that before that he had purchased books worth Rs. 20/-. " Yes, that is the way of a polished cheat. There was a similar case in Singapore. A man opened a big shop, had a lady typist, big office etc. He had roaring business. He borrowed some money from the local people. One day he was missing with all the money. He had opened a similar shop in Saigon ! "

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All were ashamed to feel and realise that they had been cheated. The saint noticed this and smoothed the situation with his sagacity and wisdom (as given in the beginning) "we have not incurred any loss." What an astounding zeal and enthusiasm for disseminating spiritual knowledge at any cost. If a single soul is benefited at the cost of Rs. six hundred, it is gain only and no loss! All were astonished by this unique broad-mindedness.

May we all imbibe this optimistic spirit of unbounded generosity.

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8. EQUAL VISION

21st OCT. '48

A Bhakta from Nilkant. a Bhangi (scavanger) by birth has come. He is sitting outside the Diamond Jubilee Hall, just opposite the window, through which he is able to drink deep the saintly splendour of Lord Siva. Siva's eye met him and at once invited him to come in. Quick came the instruction and milk and fruits were brought. Siva offered them to the humble devotee who rolled himself in the Dust of the Saint's Feet uttering 'Siva,' 'Siva.' He sees his own Ishta Mahadeva in Siva. It was a sight to see. Devas must have come to enjoy this feast for eyes. Quickly Siva too started going round to Nilakant Devotee ! One repeating " Sada Siva " and the other " Radhe Shyam." Then they fell at each other's feet. The humble devotee was bewildered. This great saint, this God on earth, can come to such level of humility. It was a shock to all present, but was a lesson in humility, and what a glorious silent message of Vedanta. And the saint proclaims " Practice Vedanta in daily life. No use singing its glories."

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9. JEEVANMUKTA WILL BREAK THROUGH WALLS ?

14th FEB. 50.

"Swamiji, have all the Sivaratri visitors arrived ?" enquired Siva. " Yes, Swamiji, most of them have come, and they have been accommodated. Kailasavati s daughter might perhaps come tomorrow morning; for she is in Rishikesh already." " Who is Kailasavati's daughter ? You mean Sudarshan ? She is Kailasavati's sister ! " " Oh, I did not know Swamiji. There are so many members in their family, and I do not know who is who !" Siva smiled. " Just because this world is false and Brahman alone is true can we call sister a daughter ? Sisterhood and daughterhood are both false ! So what does it matter if one is a sister or a daughter ! ! Mud is false and food also is false Will a Jeevanmukta eat mud on that account ? Just because all these buildings are false, will a Jeevanmukta walk straight unmindful of the intervening walls, will he simply break through the walls, will he not get knocked by the walls ? If a Jeevanmukta does so, he will only turn towards the door with a swollen forehead." Just a hint on people's mistaken ideas of Jeevanmukti. A Jeevanmukta as long as he is living has to observe the strict laws of nature. The body of elements needs its requirements.

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CHAPTER THREE

MIND YOUR MIND!

10. BECOME C.I.D. OF YOUR MIND

29th DECEMBER, 1949.

A C.I.D. Officer has come seeking information about Dasrath, a Marathi young man who has been accused of scaling the walls of the central jail at Ambala with a view to seeking Nathuram Godse, Mahatma Gandhi's assassin. Dasrath was in the Ashram for a few days.

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Siva added : "Dasrath was a hard-working young man. He was ever busy. But he was of the *chanchala* type. He wanted to go to Banares. I gave him some money to enable him to stay at Banares for some time and come back. He came back and said he would remain here for ever. Then another inmate started on a *parivrajaka* life. Dasrath followed him also. They both went away, walked from here to Banares, and then visited several places of pilgrimage, and parted company at Bangalore. The other man has since returned from *parivrajaka* tour, but we knew nothing so far of Dasrath." The C.I.D. officer thanked Siva for the information and said "I am really grateful to you Swamiji. This case has done me a good service; for it has enabled me to have your Darshan. I have for a long time been longing to come and see you. I have been reading your books and I am your disciple though I had not seen you till now."

"Become the C.I.D. officer of your own mind!" said Siva. "Introspect. Analyse yourself. Examine yourself. Meditate. Be free." A small contact with the saint, a little conversation fills one with such a storehouse of wisdom. Only the fortunate get the chance to have his Darshan and have his nectarine Upadesh.

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11. RECIPE FOR PEACE OF MIND

16th OCT. 49.

Sri R., an officer of the Govt. of India, has come. He wears a worried look. It is apparent from his looks that he is greatly perturbed. Siva greeted him and made him sit. He found out the trouble that afflicted the visitor. "I come from....." began Sri R. "Please have your bath in the Ganges" interrupted Siva, unwilling to remind him of his mental condition, while he is in the 'Abode of bliss'. "Then kindly go up the hill, there is a beautiful temple dedicated to Lord Viswanath. Chant Rudri there. Recite Stotras also. Then go to the Bhajan hall where the Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan is going on for the last five years. Do Kirtan for an hour, by that time food will be ready." In amazement R. had to yield. Without a word he left the hall.

In the afternoon R. met Siva in the office. He was a thoroughly changed person now. He was in a very happy and cheerful mood. He prostrated at Siva's feet. "Swamiji, this is really Ananda Kutir. Peace and bliss reside here only. Then he related his story. His duty is to bring to books bribe-takers and corrupt officers. Duty-bound he has to proceed against high officials. They dislike him. They make it impossible for him to carry on his work. They have forced him to go on leave. Siva told him: "Lay your burden on His shoulders. He will help you. Be honest, be truthful. If you feel that you cannot carry on due to unfavourable circumstances, resign.

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Take it as God's hint that you are to evolve rapidly in the spiritual path, and that He intends you to do something worthier than evil in a Govt. office. Dedicate yourself to some spiritual Institution. Through the Institution serve the humanity. You will attain Moksha." What a positive suggestion! Siva does not believe in negative notions and crying over one's fate. One must be practical everywhere and make the worst circumstances the most favourable one.

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12. TRICK OF THE MIND

28th SEPT. 1948

"OM Namo Narayanaya, Masterji Maharaj, you are not taking any notes in the Vedanta! You know all these things?" Master S. was embarrassed. Shivanarayanaji came to the rescue: "Swamiji, he is already well-read in Vedanta, Gita, etc." "Then, come tell me what are the Shad lingas?" asked Siva. But S. could not. Siva said: "If something presents itself—even let it be the mere terminology—you should take notes. All these ideas, thoughts, and lessons are useful."

"I shall do from tomorrow, Swamiji"

"Why not today? A little vanity, I think (Swamiji gave a jovial laugh). 'That, I am a Master an old learned man. I cannot become a student now. I should not take notes in the class even if I do not know a thing.' That is the idea, is it not?"

"No, no Swamiji. Mainly I am interested in Bhakti. And I am not so fond of acquiring a mere verbal knowledge in Vedanta which I will not be able to use."

"No, no, no! That is just a trick of the mind. If you direct your search-light of Vichara, you will find out the thief. Otherwise he will simply dupe you. You should not take the mind at its face value. But you do not care to dive deeper into its contents. You only gaze on the top. If you go deeper and analyse minutely you will find that the sort of reasoning that the

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mind offers for not taking notes is just an external misleading cloak for preserving its own vanity!"

How well does the Master understand and detect the subtle tricks of the mind. He is the greatest psychologist living. His masterpiece, "Mind, its Mysteries and Control," is a proof positive of his grand and glorious achievements in the sphere of Mind. As a sincere and loving guide he has to often look deep into the depths of his disciples' minds and warn them strictly against the cunning foe. Blessed are the striving souls who have sought shelter at His blissful Lotus-Feet. Lucky indeed to have a Godly guide to goad them on towards the goal.

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13. REAL PRATYAHARA

17th SEPT. 1948

The Forest University class was over and there was a discussion about Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga between Sri Raman Nambiar and Rajagopalji. There was an opportunity for the Divine Teacher to instruct His disciples : "Only those who have not understood properly what Pratyahara means will want to run away to forests and caves. They will live there for sometime and when they see some people they will be greatly upset. When they go into some towns they will feel something strange."

"Then what is Pratyahara, Swamiji ?"

"You should go on doing service. That is the greatest purifier. At the same time you should be mindful of the purpose of service—the goal of life. Once every hour for a couple of minutes you should close your eyes and mentally repeat His name and meditate. You should feel that you are Akarta, Abhokta, Sakshi, Satchidananda Atma. Keep a note-book by your side. Write a few Mantras in it: Keep a copy of the Gita or other scriptural texts. Read a few lines occasionally. Constantly try to concentrate your mind on the work on hand and when you meditate withdraw the mind from this work also, and direct all its rays on the Ishtam. Practise and go on practising this. You will soon attain success—*ekagrata*. You will be able to withdraw the senses completely—*pratyahara*. Afterwards even if you are in the middle of a battle-field, you

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will not be disturbed. That is real Pratyahara." The highly instructive speech of the Master was an eye-opener to the disciples. They bowed in veneration. They were glad. What a great lesson in Raja Yoga they had learnt, and all so easily too. Such real knowledge one cannot find and assimilate after years of learning but here as they received the nectar in the form of Upadesh direct from the holy lips, the import of the teachings went straight to their heart

Siva always stands for the Yoga of Synthesis. All Yogas are interconnected and help each other. Here too he has combined so beautifully the two sister Yogas—Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga into such a perfect blending, that what he says seems easy to practise too. In truth he has made Yoga simple and interesting, within reach of every body. Further he wants his children should reach Him at the earliest, through the shortest way.

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14. DISEASE IS IN THE MIND : SHAKE IT OFF !

16th SEPTEMBER, 1948.

Shivadayalji is indisposed and has wrapped himself in a heavy blanket and is wearing a woolen cap too. Siva happens to see him, and greets: "OM Namo Narayanaya. You are not feeling well ?"

"No, Swamiji, I am not feeling well for the past two days. Today I have head-ache and pain in the body, etc....."

Quickly Siva interrupted him and turning to Dr. Miss Kamala Korke said : "Doctorji, this man's heart has come between his lungs ! What to do for him ? Kindly prescribe something to cure him. (To Shivadayalji). If you are sick, you should approach a doctor !"

The entire party—for, this happened just after the evening Satsang was over—had a hearty laugh. Shivadayalji felt a little embarrassed ; to relieve him Siva said, "Beloved Yogiji ! Throw away that woolen cap first. That is the first medicine. Then the blanket also! These things only produce fever." Shivadayalji obeyed the command. As he was himself a good Sadhaka and an advanced student in Raja Yoga he instantly understood that Siva had atonce gone to the root of the problem and in his usual humorous way pointed out that diseases have their root in the mind. Siva said : "The best and the easiest method to get rid of disease is, to think and feel always *I am not this perishable body, I am the ever pure, diseaseless, and deathless Immortal Atman.* Many chronic diseases have been cured by this unique method."

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE SADHAK'S FOE

15. BEWARE OF INNER COBRAS

2nd SEPT. 1948.

Siva was returning from the temple. On His way to His Kutir, Sivadayalji offered Him bananas. Siva in His chracteristic way enquired "Everything alright?" "Yes, Swamiji, but there was a serpent in the room," answered Shivadayalji. "So everything was upset last night." And then came the pearls of wisdom: "You are afraid of this small

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creature! Look within. Introspect. There are countless cobras—Kama, Krodha, Lobha, etc.—within you. They are biting you every day. Still you take pleasure in feeding them. Mind is the biggest and most venomous cobra. The *vrittis* are its hoods."

What great subtle truth the Master has revealed in simple, ordinary talk; just a passing remark. If one just reflects over these precious words uttered by the saint, one can acquire heaps of wisdom. The inner eye will be opened. Says Siva: "You will have to really realize and understand and feel that these poor poisonous insects that bite the skin are nothing in intensity and cruelty and enmity compared to the tremendous, terrible foes within. They sting the conscience. They kill the very soul. They lead you nowhere. You are gone for several births. If a poisonous insect bites you, you will at the most die; one life gone, but by the fatal stings of these inner enemies (Kama, Krodha, Lobha,—lust, anger, and greed) you are spiritually dead for many births to come. For the Samskaras are deep and the subconscious mind carries them with the soul even after one dies. Therefore we must be on our guard against these inner cobras. They are more dangerous and fatal than the outer creeping cobras.

May the saint, the saviour give us the strength to face them and kill them with His own Sat Sankalpa.

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16. SELFISHNESS IN MASK I

12th SEPT. 1948

A visitor had failed to attend the morning class; when he saw Siva in the morning he began to give explanations. "But it is not your fault....." Said Siva. At this time V...ji entered.

"V...ji should have called you, awakened you and taken you with him to the Bhajan Hall." Siva continued. "Previously I myself used to sing Om outside every Kutir; arouse everyone and take all to the morning class. The visitors will naturally have the Bombay-habit of sleeping till 7 a.m (*To V...ji*) But you should have awakened him if necessary applying water to his eyes, waited till he got up and taken him to the Bhajan-Hall. Not only this, you should have prepared the ground the previous night itself. You should have told him about the morning class, about the benefits of common meditation and Japa, about the lectures that they will be able to hear and benefited by so that they will go to bed with that *sankalpa*. Selfishness is at the root of all this. You want to go on with your own *sadhana* and consider such service is waste of time!"

What a perfect inner research and analysis of human nature! Selfless service is the very breath of this secondless saint, and he wants and tries to fill the hearts of his disciples with this divine trait. A perennial stream of selfless service flows in His Ashram. Such a great importance he attaches to this heavenly virtue that I am sure he will even prefer a

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selfless sinner given to human service, to a selfish religious man who practises austerities. A selfless man stands on the threshold of saintliness, for he is ever ready to serve humanity. A little devotion infused into him and he becomes a perfect saint. That is why he places selfless service at the top of all other virtues.

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17. EGOISM: SHUN IT SACRED OR SECULAR;

25th SEPT. 1948

In the course of a conversation one of the visitors referred to an old asquaintance of Swamiji and said; "He has now fifteen cars, Swamiji. He is rolling in wealth." Quick came the reply: "What good is all this? Only to increase his vanity."

Turning to His disciples, "The other form of egoism is "I have performed six lakhs of OM NAMAH SIVAYA JAPA." All these Abhimanas have to be ruthlessly shunned."

And the saint warns us that spiritual Abhimana is more dangerous than the pride of rank or wealth. The feeling of a Sadhaka that I am very humble is more fatal in effects than the vain airs of a worldly man proud of His material prosperity. Worldly man is already standing low. He cannot have a fall, but a Sadhaka has attained certain heights. His fall will be fatal.

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18. SILENCE IS THE SOLUTION

A Pandit of great learning has come: "What is Divine Life, Swamiji ?"

"To observe Ahimsa, Satyam, Brahmacharya. To do Japa, Kirtan, Meditation to study Gita, Upanishads. To serve and love all—That is Divine Life."

"How to control the wandering mind ?"

"By Vairagya and Abhyasa".

"How to develop Vairagya ?" Silence.

"I think you are not well acquainted with Hindi, Swamiji. Shall I talk in English ?" Silence.

After the Pandit had left abruptly, Siva said :—

"Vain discussion. He will never do anything in his life. Such people study some books, ask some stock-questions of everyone they meet. They will go on asking. If we also go on replying, a discussion will arise.....heated debate.....hot words.....then expressions like "you are a fool, you know nothing." It is a waste of time talking to them. Do they not know the simple things ...Japa, Kirtan, Swadhyaya, God's grace etc. They will never practise. Nor will they approach anyone with the proper Bhav." Siva teaches that silence is the best attitude to sit at the feet of a saint. In silence one can learn a lot, when soul speaks to the soul.

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19. LEARN FROM EVERY EXPERIENCE

3rd JUNE, 1948

Swami Sivananda is always a student, and he always appreciates and admires the spirit of learning He always advises that one should always entertain the attitude of a student throughout one's life with a vigilant and observant attitude. Today as he entered the office, he began: "I was coming out of my kutir. A tonga was standing on the road. A Sadhu and a learned pundit and 'Bhakta' were exchanging hot words with the driver Suddenly the Bhakta started poking the driver's ribs with his umbrella and the Sadhu jumped into the tonga and started kicking the driver!" "Mysterious is the power of Maya. The Samskaras and the Vasanas are very powerful. This Sadhu has been doing 'Tapasya' in Rishikesh for atleast 25 years past. He is old, very learned but yet, these evil vrittis do not leave him."

"We should learn a lesson from this and be very vigilant. Do not see others' faults, but if you happen to see any, take a lesson and avoid it." Thus he advises often. Every experience must teach us something. We must improve daily.....every hour... nay every minute.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE GOLDEN MEDIUM

20. SIVA—THE EMBODIMENT OF LOVE

3rd OCT. 1949

Subramaniam was coming along the road on a bicycle, when he found Siva emerging out of his kutir. Atonce Subramaniam alighted from the cycle, took off the towel which he had worn round the head as a turban and adjusted his *dhoti*. Siva smiled and said: "all these formalities are not necessary for me! Love and respect have their seat in the heart, and you should have love and reverence for elders in your heart. That I will know! These external formalities do not have much significance

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for me." And he continued: "you are going about in the hot sun, making purchases at Rishikesh and supervising the construction-work. Do not hesitate to take all that you need. You must have a cold drink now, and half an hour later you should take a hot drink. If you feel like taking some fruits in the bazaar, do not hesitate. You need not submit any bills even. You have perfect liberty to do every thing to keep your body in perfect health." It is this freedom that Siva gives to every man, and it is this heart that treats every living creature as its own self; it is this universal love and cosmic consciousness that does not exclude any living creature—that attracts and enchants. And so he is more and more popular. His table is full of letters to be answered. The office-desk is full of pamphlets, leaftlets magazines, books and packed photographs to be sent to his devotees. Daily the work increases. And so he emerged out of his kutir at 3 p.m. today—an hour earlier. He found Purushottamanandji's kutir closed and bolted from inside. Siva would not knock nor call out to Purushottamji. No. He very quietly opened the outer gate and slipped out lest Purushottamji should be disturbed. He had to dress the wound on his left hand, but that he postponed to 4 p.m. when Purushottamji would get up. "Purushottamanandji is taking rest. I will have it dressed when he gets up" he said. What consideration he shows towards those who serve him! Anyone else in his position would shout from his place for his attendant.

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21. FOOD SADHANA

10th SEPT. 1948

Siva has heard of the dietic discipline of Raman Nambiar, who has been living on nuts, fruits and milk for a considerable time. This brought forth some treasures from the Holy lips: "Sadhana is grossly misunderstood. What the Lord meant by Sattwic food is that we should not take too much of chillies, too much of salt, etc. Chillies are good appetising agents. Salt is necessary for health. A little of Chillies and salt is essential. Control consists only in not catering to the vagaries of the palate. The practice of control should not weaken the system or make it sensitive. Venkataramani of Namakkal told me once that he had given up salt, chillies and tamarind for sometime; his system had become so very sensitive that even a little of these in food will upset him. Such people waste their whole life on such restricted diet. Venkataramaniji had to resume normal diet, with much difficulty.

"There was another good soul in Swargashram-Sri P.V. Acharyaji. He was a B.A.LL.B. He was a good Bhakta and a very good Sadhak. He used to measure his food in a balance! "So much of *atta* is necessary for so much bread.. So many ounces of *dal*, etc. He was very fond of this sort of Sattwic food. But he thought that sweets fall into this categery, and he consumed a lot of sweets. In course of time this produced diabetes in him. Then he came to me and

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said he was at last disillusioned. Then he began to take normal diet."

"You should observe these regulations once in a way. Once in fifteen days, observe a complete fast. Give up salt on some days. Live on milk and fruits for some days. Train yourself like that. In Ayodhya some people live on chillies alone. That is going to the other extreme. The wise plan is to observe moderation in everything." At this time some one offered guava fruits to Swamiji, and he offered one to Raman Nambiar.

"What are the properities of this fruit Swamiji ?" "Do not ask me all that; eat it." He instantly obeyed. and also started taking a little bread, etc. Thus the Enlightened One teaches through example and precept. "Avoid extremes." He warns always, Follow the golden medium; the path of wisdom," shown by Lord Krishna too in His "Song Celestial."

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22 FIRST BHOJAN THEN BHAJAN

19th SEPT. 1949

The Asst. Dist. Magistrate of Tehri dist., Narendra-nagar, has come to have Siva's Darshan. As is usual with the saint, the visitor was first entertained to tea and refreshments. In the meantime, Siva had opened his copy of 'VEDANTA JYOTI' and was singing some of the songs from it. He noticed that the A. D. M. had not taken his tea. "Your tea is getting cold. Go ahead with it," said Siva.

"Swamiji, this food we can get anywhere. I came here to have spiritual food from you." Smilingly replied the saint: "first Bhojan then Bhajan. Unless this gross physical hunger is satisfied, the mind will be unable to receive, digest and assimilate the subtle spiritual food. The old orthodox system of observing Vratas and then listening to scriptures was alright. Nowadays the new civilization has made man food-minded. Even to miss a chota-hazari or the evening tea is a great sacrifice. When the body does not get it, the mind is there only and refuses to attend to the study of scriptures! Therefore in those days it was 'first Bhajan then Bhojan' Now first Bhojan then bhajan." All had a hearty laugh at the humorous discourse.

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23. SENSIBLE SONGS

26th AUGUST, 1949.

"Call every one from the office" said Siva to Vishnudevji. And Siva seated Himself outside the dispensary. He was on his way from his kutir to the Bhajan hall for the evening Satsang. One by one all went to him to receive a handful of biscuits. Chhadaji was there to receive the Prasad. Chinmayanandaji, who had come from Uttarakashi, also partook of it. "Oh Esanandaji, you also have some biscuits. But can a Sannyasi eat biscuits?" asked Siva smilingly. And continued: "I used to say to people who go to Uttaraakashi from here 'He has Anandakutir Samskaras. He cannot live in Uttarkhand." But if here sannyasins and Brahmacharis are doing Seva night and day, they should have proper food and conveniences. You must have what is essential for the body. Only you should not give yourself away to luxury." Chhadaji was intently listening to Siva. Siva turned towards him and remarked: "I have no belief in the sannyas that you believe in." Siva's conception of sannyas is something novel and dynamic. Service, absolute selfless service which sannyasins alone can do..... That is his idea. That is what he himself is.

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24. REAL MOUNA

3rd SEPT. 1948

"OM NAMO NARAYANAYA, Swamiji," Siva greeted a new arrival, but there was no response from the new Swamiji. "Achha! You are a Mouni Baba? .....Dear Swamiji, give up this sort of meaningless Mouna-Sadhana. Mita-Bhashana is Mouna. You should talk little and talk sweetly. You are not making proper use of good faculty that the opportunity of discussing spiritual subjects with others offers and thus learn. You have lost many opportunities of rendering service to His children. A comforting word to some, a consoling message, a good word of greeting—how much joy you can infuse into others. This is a great loss. Give up this Mouna now itself."

Then turning to others Siva said, "Some of these people do not know why they are observing Mouna. Somebody observed Mouna and they also started imitating. They will not talk; but they will waste hours trying to make others understand what they could have conveyed in a couple of minutes. They will not talk with their mouths, but their mind is always talking fruitlessly. Control of speech is Mouna Mita-Bhashana is Mouna. But this Mouna is merely a whim." And thus He conveyed a storehouse of wisdom with a meaningful smile.

And at various places while exploring Mouna, one of the austerities of speech, Siva has always laid

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stress on the essential point that real Mouna is not silence of tongue, but the silence of mind. Control your thoughts, says he. Silence your emotions. The real meaning of Mouna is mental peace, and mental equilibrium. What is the use of that apparent silence? When your mind is busy talking within, there is no use. There is a great unrest and storm within the mind on account of a certain thing which you want to say, but are not saying on account of your Mouna. At such a time, speech is better than Mouna. Serenity and peace of mind is the chief requisite.

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25. BLISSFUL CONTENTMENT

1st OCT. 1949

Sri.....desired to get Mantra-diksha from Siva. He went to Siva's kutir on the banks of the Ganges early in the morning. After the initiation the new disciple was entertained by the Guru to a light repast : " it is a beautiful Kutir " explained Siva before they entered Siva's apartments. It has a splendid view of the Ganges and the Himalayas. If you sit here on the verandah or even if you are within the rooms, you would constantly hear the Pranava-nada of Ganga..." They both went in and came out in a few minutes. " You are living in this kutir Swamiji ?" The visitor asked, obviously astonished at the fact that it is as ill-ventilated as a prison cell. " You cannot get any light in the rooms except at mid-day ! They are not rooms, they are caves, and too small even for that ! And you work in that room. It is not sufficient to accommodate your manuscripts and books. You cannot move in it without treading on something or tripping over something else. The bedroom is damp and one cannot even breathe in it. I wonder how you live in it. Though I get a positive feeling of spiritual elation while I am in the room, I think I will not be able to keep body and soul together for six months if I lived in this kutir. Why don't you change into a better suite of rooms, Swamiji ?" " No, no. I am alright here " replied Siva, the Mahatyagi and Mahatapasvi. The visitor bowed

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again in bewildered amazement and left. This emperor of emperors is ever resting in his own Satchidananda Swaroop. What does he care for this world? Though he lives in this world, and talks and moves with us, he is beyond Maya and the three Gunas. He is ever swimming in the ocean of bliss—the Paramahamsa. To know and realise his blissful mental state is to know the Highest.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE GLORY OF SERVICE

26. SIVA MAKES A MILLIONAIRE'S DAUGHTER BREAK STONES.

18th MAY, 1948.

Swami Sivananda lays the greatest stress on selfless service, and encourages others for it. He teaches this divine art through example as well as by precept. He Himself sets an example to others in this respect and He inspires high officials and rich businessmen to carry baskets on their head.

No one is spared. Young daughter of a Jewish millionaire—Sri Annabella and her mother—Srimati Liliane Shamash were walking along with the saint near the Yajnashala. Without the slightest hesitation Siva became one with the labourers there and started breaking the stones. With a broad winning smile and characteristic 'Hum' he invited the two ladies to join him in the task. Delicate soft hands began breaking the hard stones. Thus does he make even menial work look glorious. The ladies even seemed to enjoy the task as fun.

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27.. PASSION FOR SERVICE.

4th JUNE, 1948.

A grief-stricken man torn and broken with the storms of the world took shelter in the grace of the saint. He craved for solace. The compassionate sage led the young man out of the office, seated him on a bench outside and offered his golden advice : "The Lord's name will dispel your gloom. Now repeat the Name with me " and He did Kirtan with the visitor, the chanting of OM followed. It had miraculous effect on the visitor. He regained composure. Siva asked him to do Japa on the Ganges bank. Now the poor man was relieved ! Siva is all mercy !

SIVANANDA

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28. ZEAL FOR SERVICE

12th JUNE, 1948.

Today the Secretary of Kamliwala Kshettar approaches Siva. The saint greets him most cordially with the usual hospitality, fruits, milk etc.

" Swamiji, I have a request to make."

" I am always at your service."

" Kindly accept the honorary advisorship of the Kshettra. All of us feel that the Kshettra and the Rishikesh Sadhus will all be greatly benefited by your sagely advice. You are the only Sannyasin who can advise us "

Siva was silent The request was repeated. " Yes, Maharaj, I shall certainly try to serve you all as an advisor." After he had left the saint said, "At first I did not want to accept the job. But then I thought this might be an opportunity offered by the Lord for me to serve the Sadhus. I will not forsake any opportunity of doing service. So I accepted. He was also greatly pleased."

He lives only to please all, to serve all. What an incarnation of spirit of service this great soul is. He does not care for His own conveniences so long he can get a chance to serve humanity.

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29. HOW TO SERVE GOD

21st JULY, 1950

"I was studying this book, Swamiji: So I could not attend the Satsang at night," Sri K. said when he was questioned by Siva why he was absent for the night Satsang. "The other day you said that you had diarrhoea and so could not attend Satsang. Now you say you were reading: so you did not attend. Tomorrow you will have some other excuse. You should question yourself. If you don't like it, then I will not question you any more, but you should question and ask yourself "what for have I come here? Am I doing what is necessary to achieve my aim?" "If you work in an office and earn Rs 50. a month, you are ever ready to serve the petty master there. You are ever ready to obey him: 'Yes sir' you say for everything. You have renounced the whole world and come here to attain the highest Wisdom. Here you should not expect a master who would bully you and extract work (Sadhana) from you. You should be your own master. You should question yourself rigorously and even punish yourself if you are not doing all that you can to evolve. Obedience, adherence to the discipline of the Ashram, humility—all these Sadhu qualities you have to develop yourself. No one will enforce them on you. You should find out the daily routine of the place where you are staying and automatically fall in line with it. That shows you are a good aspirant. If you do not conform to the discipline of

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the Ashram and go your own self-willed way, then it means you have not disciplined yourself. No one need impose discipline upon you. For a moment put yourself in the other man's position. Just think for a moment that you yourself are conducting the Ashram and that yourself have instituted the daily Satsang. There are several Ashramites. Would you or would you not expect all of them to attend the Satsang?" "Yes Swamiji" "Then is it not your duty to attend the Satsang without even being told to do so? When there is a common function, if all people attend the same, there is a special charm in it. It would be glorious!"

With what great consideration and power of reasoning he approaches his own students! No commands, but sincere suggestions, and they too are accompanied with profound kindness and love. Long live the universal Friend and Guide!

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30. DO IT NOW

11th JULY 1950.

"Not tomorrow or the day after, but now itself! They may change their mind later on and go away. We may not then have the opportunity of rendering our service to them Bring the books now,; I will sign them and you should hand them over to Sri Rao immediately," said Siva when Nityanandaji told him that a visitor would be staying at the Ashram for a few days and that Siva might give him some books tomorrow or the day after. This is not a motto or an ideal with Siva. It is his inborn trait. He cannot put a thing off to 'tomorrow'—his life itself is one long illustration of this principle Often his disciples are unable to keep pace with him; they sometimes find him a very hard taskmaster, but no one can fail to recognise that he does not tell others alone to 'do it now.' Siva then explained "This is one of the most important rules in Karma Yoga. Opportunities come and go A Karma Yogi should be ever alert and vigilant and utilise every opportunity for service. When one thing is put off for 'tomorrow,' then other similar works accumulate around it and then the opportunity is lost. Procrastination is the greatest enemy of a of a Karma Yogi." The books were brought and Siva autographed them immediately saying at the same time: "what you wish to do tomorrow do today, what you wish to do in the afternoon, do in the forenoon. Then you would grow into a real Karma Yogi." Here he has explained the secret of Karma Yoga in a nutshell. D.I N. He ever repeats —utilise every second, be alert and catch hold of the flying time.

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31. UNCEASING SERVICE

22nd DECEMBER, 1949

The percentage of sugar in Siva's urine has been persistently high. He has developed a slight but unyielding pain in the right arm. In his child-like simplicity he said: "It is bearable today." (It is a week since the pain started and Siva would not whisper of it to any soul on earth!) "But if it grows a little more, than the weeping stage would come!" He said it and laughed Siva took off the coat and gown. There is definite swelling in the arm. "Has it been paining for some days past, Swamiji?" enuqired Swami Chidanandaji. "Yes, yes, it has been there for a week" replied Siva to the surprise of all "We should get Dr. Bose to examine Swamiji. But it would be helpful if Swamiji would not write too much for a couple of days at least" said Chidanandaji. "That is death while living. It will be alright but I will have to go on with the writing,' said Siva, who a few momments before thought he could even reach the 'weeping-stage.'

Dr. Bose came. He wanted to make sure that Siva was not having high blood pressure. He examiend. Dr. Bose was visibly surprised. "Swamiji has the healthiest heart for a person of his age, what with the unceasing overwork and with a severe Tapasya in the immediate past. Systole 140-diastole 95!" How can a heart in which God dwells in the form of universal divine love be weak? As soon as the doctor left, Siva noted down the diagnosis of the doctor. "It will be useful one day," he said. This doctor of bodies and souls of patients all over the world himself suffers from so many physical ailments. May he cure them all by his own divine Sankalpa! May he ever live to lead us on!

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32. TRUE CHARITY

9th MARCH, 1950

In the evening, a batch of people was going along the road singing songs to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Siva called them and took them into the Mela office. After making them sing the Lord's Name (Kirtans and Bhajans) for some time, he reverentially gave them Rs. 5/- and some fruits as love-offering. Later in the evening it was pointed out to Siva that they were Beedi-vendors! "You mean to suggest that because they were beedi-vendors we should not have given them Rs. 5/-. No, no that should not be our attitude. Charity is charity. We should not discriminate in the matter of charity. Does the sun discriminate and shine only on good people? Does Ganga practise discrimination and give water only to the good people? Does a mango tree yield its fruits only to good people? Does air refuse to enter the nostrils of wicked people? Every one is Lord Narayana Himself. Every one is your own. Atman. Have the Virat-bhavana always. That is the road to Moksha."

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CHAPTER SEVEN

GOD AND HIS NAME

33. TYPHOID THIRD WEEK DEVOTION

31st DECEMBER, 1949.

Today is the 6th anniversary of the Viswanath Mandir Prathisthapana. But today happened to be Ekadashi also. The Puja had not commenced till about 10 a.m., and Siva had come to the temple. "The temple is dull this time? Last year there were flags and festoons; all over the place there were flowers; and there were a number of banana-poles. This year I see only few banana-poles and they have not yet been fixed!" Siva smiled: "This is typhoid-third-week devotion." A visitor looked enquiringly at Siva. "Till the third week the temperature of the typhoid patient will go on increasing. But during the third week it will begin to decline gradually. Typhoid-third-week-devotion is devotion that is intense in the beginning, and wanes away a little later. Every one laughed. Siva loves humour. He teaches through humour. His famous book '*Wisdom in Humour*' is unique.

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34. STAMMER CURE

1st MAY, 1950

Sri Hanuman Prasad Poddar of Gita Bhawan has sent a young Marwari with a letter of introduction to Siva. The boy suffers from stammering. The boy met Siva when he was returning from the evening Satsang and showed the letter to him. "Sing Kirtan; you will be alright" said Siva and at once repeated 'OM OM OM' thrice. He asked the boy to repeat OM along with him for a while. "Oh, you are alright." "Yes, Swamiji" said the boy astounded at his own unshaking voice! "Sing the Mahamantra Kirtan" said Siva and himself sang the Mahamantra. The boy followed suit. All this had a miraculous effect. "Daily sing the Mahamantra for at least half an hour. The stammering trouble will never come to you again." Thus the saint with his divine Mahasankalpa performs miracles in his secret silent way, and infuses faith in the hearts of men for God's sweet powerful Name.

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35. THE UNSEEN CONSTANT COMPANION

25th SEPT. 1948

This great glorious man of God Himself is ever resting in his own Satchidananda Swaroopa. He is one with the Absolute - Para Brahma. He is even in that Divine Consciousness. God must occupy the thoughts of everyone at all times, and He sees to it by His frequent reminders.

An old South Indian couple were on a visit to Rishikesh. They had stayed in the Ashram for a few days and were leaving the Ashram for South India. After a trip to Lakshman Jhula they came to the Ashram and prostrated before the Saint. "How do you like these places? Did you enjoy your trip to Lakshman Jhula? Did you see all the places?"

"Yes, Swamiji, wherever I go in Rishikesk I find immense peace of mind. I have never enjoyed this peace before. This Ashram is full of peace and bliss. There is no place like this anywhere in India. When I think of the happiness that we derive here my mind yearns to settle down here itself."
"What about your family?"

"I have no one else" replied the lady. "Only we two. He has also retired long ago. We lead a lonely life. There is no hindrance. We can easily come and settle down here. He has already transferred his pension-papers to Dehra Dun. We shall

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go to South India only to wind up the family-affairs and then come here once and for all." "Hum, there is no one else for you?" "No Swamiji, only we two." "But you have forgotten the 3rd member of your family—God! He is your constant companion. You can never be absolutely single. God is always with you!" They both blushed. They felt ashamed to have forgotten the unseen constant companion.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CULTURING THE CIVILISED

36. DESERVE THE DESCENT

14th SEPT. 1948

Sri Sankaranarayana Iyer of Nagpur comes and prostrates to Siva. "OM Namo Narayanaya! what has happened now? You want to leave today?" "I am leaving tomorrow, Swamiji." "When you go back you must make a firm resolve to spread the message of Divine Life wherever you go. You must dedicate yourself to the cause of Divine Life. You must become a dynamic worker in the Divine field." "With your blessings, Swamiji."

Turning to others Siva said, "He belongs to the family of Appaya Dikshitar. It is not a joke to belong to this great saint's line. (To Sri Sankaranarayana Iyer) You should show by your own actions that you are worthy of this descent. There is no use merely claiming ancestry to a spiritual hero. You should deserve it!" "Yes Swamiji, I shall try my best."

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"Study Sanskrit, then Gita, Upanishads and Appaya Diskhita's works also. Then start spreading his message. Be humble and simple. Some people go on tom-toming their ancestry to earn their livelihood. When people see, you they should at once recognize that Appayya Dikshita's blood runs through your veins. You should possess such exemplary character. Nothing is impossible. If you try God's grace will also come and you will shine as a true descendent of Appayya Diskhita."

"With your blessings Swamiji.." Sri Sankara-narayana Iyer prostrated again. "Jay - ho - ji. May God bless you!"

This is the saint's unique method. He makes a man awake to the fact that he is great, that greatness lies hidden in him and that he too can work wonders. Some little good quality he must find in a man, and then he takes it upon his shoulders to make him really good and great by his kind encouragement and sincere appreciation. It is because he is no saint but God Himself. He wants all his children to be great and glorious, and he says it often that he wants his disciples to become more famous than he himself, and he means it.

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37. IMPORTANCE OF NAMES

Siva has received a letter; the writer has signed himself as T.A.S. Sastry. This amused Siva. He wrote: "Kindly always use your full name: abandon this modern craze always to shorten it, dropping out the most essential part. Even if you go on singing your full name a hundred times, that will tantamount to Japa!" "Shankara"! T.A.S. Sastry has just the same significance as A.B.C. Z! Whereas T.A. Sankara Sastri is an elevating name!" Then Siva said smilingly, "I told Sri M. Srinivasan so. He was signing himself M.S. Vasan, I pointed out to him that Srinivasan is the Lord's name, sacred and elevating. And by cutting it shorter it loses all its glory. He atonce caught up with the idea. But there are even now many V. Iyers and N. Iyers, and S. Menons, who have yet to learn the glory of the name that their parents have bestowed upon them. Our ancients were very wise. They called the children by Lord's names. So that simply by calling out to the children they would have several times repeated Lord's name. But modern wise men would run away from this most pleasant form of Sadhana, too. What a pity: They want to run away from God." This greatest Yogi in His own words, a Keval Adwaitin of Sri Sankara's school of thought is the greatest Bhakta too. He is never tired of singing the glories of Sankirtan and advocating the bliss that lies in repeating Lord's name. His marvellous master-piece, "Japa Yoga is a commentary on it. The book has turned many atheists into enthusiastic" Bhaktas. He himself is a strange mixture of Bhakti and Vedanta.

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38. MANNERS

11th FEB. 1950

The early morning office kirtan was in progress. V...Swamiji was a bit late for the kirtan, and he entered the Diamond Jubilee Hall and unceremoniously walked past all the people sitting for kirtan. As soon as kirtan was over, Siva called V. Swamiji and said: "You should either come in time for the kirtan, or, if you happen to come late, you should observe the decorum suited to the occasion and sit near the door through which you enter. With losely hanging clothes you simply out through the entire hall to resume your usual seat, and in the course of this journey you disturb the whole satsang. You do so because you do not feel that it is indecent. I am very sure that once you realise the mistake you will never more commit it." V...swamiji bowed and left. Siva continued: "There are innumerable other little things to which one seldom pays attention. Some people have the nasty habit of betting their fingers. Some others use their saliva to stick stamps on the envelopes. They have no sense of decency at all. They are all uncultured people. You can tell from a man's behaviour if he is cultured or not? Bengalis, as a class, are highly cultured in this respect. One should learn from them these elementary manners and etiquettes." This great saint, though not of this world is so very careful about each and everything Himself possessing the best manners, exquisitiely refined ways, he expects his disciples to imitate him.

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39. ATTEND TO THE MINUTEST DETAIL

22nd DECEMBER, 1949

After the morning class Siva came first out of the Bhajan hall. Suddenly he turned round and stood near the threshold watching one by one leave the hall.

Sivanarainji came out and put on his slippers.

"Oh, they were yours?" querried Siva. "I was wondering who could have left the shoes here. In future, do not leave the shoes on the way. Somebody might trip over them. They must always be left away from the threshold. In the early morning while it is still dark, some one might run into the hall, and the slippers might perform a good tooth extraction! Even in these little things one should develop the reflective buddhi. Before doing a thing one should think "what might be the consequences? In what way would it be of service to others? In what way it might harm others? When this vichara becomes continuous, one is established in righteousness. When the vichara becomes deep-rooted and natural, one experiences Brahmic consciousness too. The little thing leads to the great experience." And so too if you observe the saint in his daily life, you find that though he is ever resting in his Satchidananda Swaroopa, he is ever alert and observant and watchful. In every activity he is careful about the minutest detail.

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40. COMPASSIONATE SIVA.

My mind shudders to think of the atrocious deed which I am going to narrate, my pen refuses to move. They are even trying to kill the God on earth, the very thought of it makes me sick and my head reels. Today at night Satsang, Govindan approached Siva with axe in hand. The axe was raised, gods shuddered, the presiding deity of Govindan's hand trembled —the axe missed its mark, the door which received the blow cried aloud its warning. Govindan became nervous. He raised the axe again, this time a picture on the wall received the blow. The two blows missed their marks. Only the wooden handle of the axe struck Siva's head. Generally, as soon as Siva enters the Bhajan hall he would remove the cloth-turban he wears when he leaves his Kutir (during winter months). But today he forgot (I should not say it forgot), anyway the axe-handle could strike only the cloth padding on Siva's head! Siva woke up to the fact that someone was assaulting him. He raised the hand. The raised hand received the axe, and the axe made a mark on the skin. It was not more than a scratch! V...swamiji who was sitting near Siva got up in hurry, and hugged Govindan so tightly that he could not lift his hand again! V...ji drew Govindan out of the hall. The crowd in the Bhajan hall immediately realised what had happened. One or two people helped Govindan's hands and feet to be bound, and Govindan was being removed. One or two people fell on the assailant and started beating him. The saint was shouting at

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the top of his voice—"Oh, don't beat him, don't beat him." Padmanabhji rescued Govindan and locked him in a room nearby. "Continue the Kirtan" said Siva, and the Kirtan, Arati and Shanti Pat were duly conducted and the Satsang came to a close. After the Kirtan, all went to the room in which Govindan had been kept. The rope that bound him was removed. Police had arrived by that time. Siva went straight to Govindan, and bowed to him with folded palms. The police inspector gazed at this scene in wonder. "Govind Swamiji, do you want to give me some more blows? Here I am. Kindly satisfy yourself." Govindan muttered: "No, I do not want to beat you any more. I am satisfied." All were just furious in silence at the words of the villian. "What shall we do, Swamiji? Shall I lodge a complaint against this man?" asked the police inspector. "No, no. Just send him away from Munikireti, that is enough," and then the saint quickly left the place. Who can measure the depth of love and compassion that the heart of this God on earth possesses. Here is a man who came to kill him, but he does not hesitate to pardon him the very moment. Divine Gurudev, we ever bow to you in love, awe and wonder.

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41. THE REFUGE OF ALL

An aspirant has come from Orissa. He has received ochre-robes from a Sannyasi of his place, who however did not accept him as his initiated disciple...it was his policy not to initiate anyone into Sannyas and make him his disciple. Yesterday he came and requested that he should be initiated into Sannyas. I said 'no'. Yet. he has the perseverence to come again today and request again. I had a heart-to heart tale with him. Now I have decided to give him Sannyas." "There should be some like him I should have a heart-to-heart talk: if my heart permits me, I will give them Sannyas. God will take care of them " Turning to the new arrival Siva said: "Yes, I will give you Sannyas on Vijayadasami day." His compassion is unlimited. He knows not how to refuse a request. He is ever Asutosh. To His devotees He is all in all.

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42. THE ETERNAL TEACHER

The morning University class was just over.

"Atmaramji! are you taking notes of these lectures?"

"No, Swamiji."

"You see! That is a mistake. Gaining knowledge is not such an easy thing. The Rishis have prescribed the three-fold process of Sravan-Manan-Nididhyasan for the gaining of knowledge. If you do Sravan for one minute, you should do Manan of the same topic for 10 minutes, then Nididhyasan fo one hundred minutes. Then these ideas will become your own. Merely nodding to these talks will be of no use. Further when you develop the habit of recording the thoughts that are given out here, you will also begin to listen most attentively to the lectures. Otherwise the tendency will be to doze off during the lectures."

Even today I am a student!" Continued Siva; "I carefully listen to the lectures delivered here; then I go to my room, think over the matter, and write my articles." Then turning to the others Siva said: "Atmaramji, too, will deliver lectures in the morning class. Did you see his wonderful performance the other day—the Doctor's parade full of humour! It produced side splitting laughter. He has a brilliant intellect and he is full of zeal and steady application to work he undertakes.

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"Everyone should be trained to lecture. Everyone here has all the faculties hidden within! You should all try to bring out those talents and develop them. In this Ashram you have the fullest scope for that." Certainly under the loving guidance of such an encouraging Master everyone can have the fullest evolution in the shortest space of time. Not all his disciples were geniuses, but he has made them all rise in greatness and glory and today they shine as great Heroes in the field of spirituality! The glory undoubtedy goes to the Miraculous Master!

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48. REAL SERVICE

As soon as Siva came into the office he enquired of Vishnu Swamiji: "Vishnu Swamiji! Did you go to Shroff's Kutir this morning to teach him Asans?"

"Yes, Swamiji."

"That is good. Some of these old people might feel shy to practise Asans in public. They will think," 'supposing I happen to fall down while standing on Sirshasan, people will laugh!' and so avoid coming to the Asan Class. For such people's sake you should go to their room and teach them Asanas. That is real spirit of service. Another important point, do not simply come away after the Asan Practice is over. Do a few minutes' Japa and meditation, a couple of minutes' silent meditation, repeat Shanti Mantras, and then come away. Thus even this Asan Class will be converted into a class on Yoga of Synthesis, with Japa, Dhyana, Kirtan, etc. The effects of such Asan practice will be much more lasting.

This kind of *aggressive* service is beyond the human comprehension. A man would expect that one who has to learn should come to me, show respect and then he would teach him but here the Master divinises. His purpose is to convert humanity into Divinity. So He is ever teaching such lessons of service to His disciples—where the teacher goes to the disciple and teaches him as if he is being obliged. This is the true Divine Service. So divine a saint!

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44. THE AGGRESSIVE TEACHER

Sri K.S. Venkataramani is leaving for Delhi today. He was in the League Section purchasing some of the Ayurvedic Pharmacy Products. In came Siva, "Venkataramaniji! I wanted to teach you some Asans and Kriyas before you go!" So saying child-like, simple Siva sat unceremoniously on the ground where he thought fit. Then Siva started demonstrating Asans to the astonished gaze of Sri K.S.V. and Sri R.V. Sastriji. ".....This is Uddiyana Bandha..... pumping it quickly.....it becomes Agnisara Kriya. These two act as a natural insulin! The Pancreatic secretion is increased.....Just bend and try to touch the knee with your nose.....It is not necessary that you should actually do so, mere effort is sufficient... and Paschimottan Asan...these are all natural treatment for diabetes. You can do them just for a few minutes every day. With profound gratitude Sri K.S.V. said, "Swamiji! what wonderful Kriyas these are! What a wonderful spiritual heritage we have, which we do not know. The pity is that the average man to-day is not aware of the very existence of these Asans, Kriyas and so on. But for you, they would have been altogether forgotten! Who can possess such a loving heart, such limitless zeal for

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service, such astonishing simplicity and nobility of demeanour. No. He is one without a second. No one can surpass Him. No one can ever equal Him! Even without a request or a prayer, Swamiji inspires us, nay compels us to practise these wonderful Yogic Kriyas and instantly teaches us, too."

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45. MODERATION IS THE WISE COURSE

28th NOVEMBER, 1948

Sri K.S.V. wanted to know if Brahmi Buti would suit him. "Yes, it is very good. Soak almonds in water overnight. Peel them; make them into a paste along with Brahmi Buti. Prepare a Sherbat and take it, say, after your morning coffee."

"Swamiji, I thought of it only as a substitute to coffee which I want to give up altogether."

"No, no, you need not give it up. It is necessary for brain-workers like you. The prohibition is only for the sake of those who drink gallons of coffee every day. Always observe strict moderation in diet. Then whatever food you take becomes Sattwic."

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46. MANUAL SERVICE IS ESSENTIAL

14th DECEMBER, 1948

In the morning while entering the office Siva happened to note a few Banana peels lying in a corner. " Nowadays no one sweeps the office in the morning. All enthusiasm has faded away, I think. "

" Last Sunday I swept Swamiji ! " said one.

" Day before yesterday was my turn, " said another. Siva listened like a school Master listens to the lame excuses of the children who had forgotten to do homework !

" If that genuine interest in keeping the office clean was in you all, then even the thought of " my turn " " his turn " would not arise. Venkatesanandaji may be busy with letters, but then at least the junior inmates ought to take this work upon themselves. I am not saying because the others are senior. But they may feel that they may be able to do more intellectual work in that period. Manual work is very essential. It will keep your body healthy. It will provide you with a spirit of service. You will be able to develop humility, forbearance and other divine virtues. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. You should take delight in such Seva. There should be no compulsion from outside, nor should you do it just because someone else is asking you to do." And the shaft went straight to the heart. Everyone present realised the blunder of shirking from the glories of service. What opportunities they are losing to evolve and grow quickly. With the glorious

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example of such an inspiring Master (when the Viswanath temple was being built the celestial saint used to become one with the labourers and carry bricks on his Divine head) who could belittle the glory of manual labour!

May he take us, the tottering travellers, along the right path—to the goal.

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47. RENUNCIATION IS NECESSARY

"Are there any shops on the way?" Siva enquired of Sri Sankaranarayana with motherly affection, who has returned today from several places of seclusion. "Swamiji the Sadhu we met gave us some *rotties* to take with us, and when we went we had taken some fruits, etc., from here itself." "And there?" "There Swamiji we had a sumptuous meal." "What food?" "Sambar, rice, *roty*, ghee — a *pucca* Madrasi dinner Swamiji." "There is a cow also Swamiji. So we got good milk, etc." "That is the secret, wherever you go there you will find Sambhar, iddili and coffee. The body of even a Jnani needs certain things. You cannot run away from it. The secret of renunciation is renunciation of attachment. Prakriti has her play, so long as her instruments—the body, the mind, are there. The Jnani dissociates himself from the Koshas, identifies himself with the Akarta and Abhokta Atman. That is also the secret of Karma Yoga. We also work here, and we have found out the secret processes by which we are able to convert work into worship." Here Siva wanted to give the silent peaceful listerners a surprise. "If we had known this trick before we need not even have come here?"

All looked at each other: "What a strange thing to say!" The Master at once realised the mental confusion of his disciples. "But, if we had not come here, from the bondage of family and relations, properties and possessions, etc., we could not have

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found out the secret," There was a great relief among the listeners.

"Renunciation is absolutely necessary," the Master continued, "once you recognize Maya and her mischief, and pierce through the veil, find out the inner antidote to Maya's poisons—then you are able to live under all conditions, unaffected."

Another shower of wisdom was at hand. A batch of visitors arrived. The saint asked a few Ashramites to attend to their lodging, etc. Some one informed that the Sadhaka who had the key of a particular room was meditating in his own room. "What meditation is this? You must first fulfil your duties and then meditate. He should have kept the keys outside and then shut himself up. Look how many people are inconvenienced! How can God be pleased by meditation when you keep his devotees waiting outside?" What a divine revelation!

The greatest duty and requirement of a sincere Sadhaka is that he does not put to inconvenience anyone. Worship of Virat is the best way of His worship. This subtle secret the merciful Master has made. Selfless service of the entire humanity (for God knows no boundaries) with Atma Bhava is the foundation and the greatest requisites of real meditation.

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48. MEDITATION—THE SHORT-CUT

17th JANUARY, 1949

A Vedantin has come: "Swamiji! I wish to ask you some questions on the spiritual side. May I?" asked he after offering due respects to the saint. "Of course, you are welcome to." "I wish to know from you Swamiji, how can I develop universal consciousness." "Meditate on formulas like, "I am not the body. I am not the mind I am not the senses. I am the absolute Brahman, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. That is the nature of Satchidananda." As this idea gets deeper and deeper into your mind, you will enjoy the universal consciousness."

"In that case, Swamiji, how am I to be sure that I am not merely hypnotising myself through these into suggestions. That which is beyond mind cannot be obtained through the mind's working! In that case even meditation becomes impossible."

"You are right," came the cool reply. "If you get into these argumentations, you will come to an impossible state. Some sort of auto-suggestion is necessary in the beginning till you reach the stage of intuitive perception. These formulas have been culled from the Upanishads, which are the utterances of seers and therefore eternal verities."

"Swamiji, how are we to ensure that this consciousness is kept up throughout? When we meditate sometimes the consciousness is roused, but then again when

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we turn to work, this consciousness vanishes." "You have to go on with the practice" advised the saint. "Sadhanachatushtaya is necessary. Mind does not want to meditate on God. It always flows outside. Ganges water always flows down; but the Yogi tries to take it up to its own source. That is Yoga. You should have to cajole the mind and coax it to do the meditation. Viveka and Vairagya are necessary: then Samadhi, Shat-sampatti are necessary. Then Mumukshutva will come. Then and then alone will the mind long to realise the Supreme." The Vedantic visitor was still doubtful. "Some philosophers and Yogis say that the Atman is not attained through all these Sadhanas. Swamiji, their view seems to be, as I said, that, that which is beyond the body, the mind, and the intellect cannot be attained through any amount of effort with these."

"Quite true. That is what the Sruti says too. The Sruti positively hints at the doctrine of Grace. God's grace is necessary. Otherwise nothing is possible." "But how are we to deserve His Grace, Swamiji?" Exactly, that is the point. You have to deserve the Grace and invite it to descend on yourself. Therefore the Sadhanas are prescribed. First acquire Sadhana-chatushtaya and Daivi Sampat. Then do Sravan, Manan, Nididhyasan, and then you will have universal consciousness."

"That is a long, long process, Swamiji. We want a short-cut, a royal Road."

"That short-cut and royal road is meditation. Get

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up at 4 a.m. It is very favourable for meditation. Meditate on Vedantic formulas. Try as far as possible to keep up the Brahma-bhavana throughout the day. Gradually you will become established in it." This satisfied the visitor. At the very outset Siva had given the right prescription : Meditate. But the Sadhak was satisfied through this long process of explanation. What patience the Sage possesses !

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49. EVOLUTION NOT REVOLUTION

30th JANUARY, 1949

Saint Siva is wisdom personified. He does not believe in revolution of the soul. He believes in evolution. It is a silent, unseen process, silent but sure—like a bud turning into a flower. No one can know when a bud becomes a flower. Such is the evolution of the soul—slow—but sure. He does not want everyone to break their habits at once, abruptly —all of a sudden. He does not advise and approve of a jump from luxury to austerity.

Early in the morning before even coming into the office, Siva entered the bath-room. He found a few young Sadhakas waiting for hot-water-bath, along with more aged inmates; just a mere smile, and OM Namo Narayanaya ! "You are also taking bath in hot water ?" And that was all. No advice. No sermon, but the young Sadhaka understood all the same—a good, invigorating and grand plung-bath in the Ganges is indicated. This is his wise way of leading the young, educated, modern Sadhakas. He is lenient and loving, and allows him the little luxury that he is accustomed to. Occasionally he would hint at the proper path, the proper attitude to spiritual life. The wise Sadhaka takes the hint, and tries to revolutionise his inner nature. And the Master always teaches, "One should ascend to the heights of spirituality step by step as it is evolution and not revolution."

SIVANANDA

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50. VIGILANCE

7th OCTOBER, 1948

"I told you the other day itself that these account books will be spoilt by rains! They thought that sun had come—so there would be no rains!"

"It is the wind that spoils it, Swamiji. If the wind is not there water does not come in. It is the wind that misdirects the rain!"

"All right," said Siva smiling, "send a petition to 'Vayu' not to blow when it is raining, and thus spoil our papers. Very well, you can now go on keeping the account-books and papers in a careless manner."

The Ashramite felt ashamed, "No Swamiji I did not mean that. I shall have to have the papers and books removed from near the Verandah."

"You see, you should always be careful. Some people think there will be no snakes and scorpions, in summer. Instead if you are always careful and take a lantern you will be safe. As soon as the work is over, the hands should automatically bolt the doors and windows and move the account-books and papers to safe places." And the Divine Teacher continued, "I am always careful regarding the very minutest details. Several people here used to ask me to send large consignments of books, through people who go to the same city from here. Sometimes Nijabodh Swamiji with his keen interest in economy would suggest getting our books from Calcutta or other places by Goods Train. What would

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happen to them? When they reach here, half of them would be soaked in oil, the other half would smell of jaggery!

"The other day Pannalal's friend asked me if I had some books, etc., for him to carry to Pannalalji. I actually had a big parcel of books, but I would not send it with him. He might himself forget it at the railway station, or in the carriage! He might forget to deliver it immediately he reached Amritsar. And, then, he might send the parcel through someone, and thus the books might go astray and never reach the person at all! All this to save a few rupees! I don't allow it at all. Even at the cost of a few extra rupees, I send the books direct to the persons instead and thus ensure proper delivery."

These little things matter, and the saint is always careful about the minutest details, as he is wise and great. Trifles make perfection, but perfection is not a trifle. So as he is always attentive to the trifles, he is ever perfect. All this we have to learn from Him. The perfect way of living, has to be known from him.

Something important came from the Holy Lips of Siva later: Sri Balan sincerely felt that places of Sadhana should be far away from the realms of women and that the Sadhaka should never meet or talk to a member of the fair sex. Siva's wisdom and sagacity burst forth: "That will never do Balanji. You will run away from women. But Maya has her own ways of working her charms into you! A Sadhu

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may seclude himself in a cave or in a dense forest. After a long time one woman—a tribes woman—would come, " Swamiji," she would plead, "I have a bad ulcer on my arm. May I beg of you to help me ?" Out of pity you might write a card to me to send her some medicines. The card might have been lost here ! The woman will worry the Sadhu every day. Out of sheer pity you might undertake to write to me again. That is how it starts. Even great Vairagis have been trapped, like this ! You should all be mentally vigilant always.

What a shower of wisdom and warning ! Strange and subtle are the ways of Maya !

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51. CONQUER INBORN LOWER NATURE

2nd OCTOBER, 1948.

On his way back from the morning Yoga-Vedanta college Session, Siva noticed that one young boy had spat just outside his room underneath the Yajnashala. "Who has cleaned his teeth here ?" enquired Siva with a smile. "If one is doing this in this season, he will probably urinate within the room in winter when the cold wind blows!" The boy came out of the room and bowed to Siva. "Laziness is the inborn nature of every man. This boy is not to be blamed It is human nature. But my dear young man, we are here only to conquer our nature. It must be your second nature to keep everything neat and clean and to develop good habits—hygienic habits. This is the age for it too." Someone then pointed out to Siva that another aged Sadhak was also irregular in this respect. "But that is a difficult case. He is aged. He has done a lot of work for the Society, too. Even now he is rendering yeoman service to the cause. Such people must be excused." And with a mischievous smile he added, "perhaps I should also be exempted and placed in the same category! For instance my bowels are very loose. Yet I will control it. That is because this has become my habit, my second nature."

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52. GURU'S PERMISSION COUNTS!

15th DECEMBER, 1948

The Avadhuta Swamiji is seriously ill. Sri Rajagopalji and Sridharswamiji are in constant attendance. Through their loving service and the Master's Grace the old dying Swami has been keeping better. Siva went to see Avadhuta Swamiji and made affectionate enquiries about his health. Govindaswamiji who just recovered from a recent attack of Malaria came on the spot. "How are you?" enquired Siva. "Swamiji, he had high fever in the afternoon," explained Sridhar Swamiji. Siva noticed Govindaswamiji's unshaven face. "I think a good shave is urgently necessary. It will relieve him of half the feverish appearance. I always believe that a neat and clean appearance goes a long way in the curing of a disease." "Swamiji!" said Sridharswamiji, "I thought it would be wise to clip Avadhuta Swamiji's beard also a bit. Because now he is greatly inconvenienced while taking milk or coffee on account of the beard." Quick came the reply: "No, no, we should take Sendamangalam Swamiji's permission (the Avadhuta Swamiji's Guru). Without his permission you cannot cut his hair." What consideration! And he silently teaches the lesson of Guru's sovereignty and suzereinty over each of his disciples. Guru is even an authority in every matter. Nothing can be done and should be done without his permission. We shoud learn to undergo slight inconveniences and difficulties on this holy ground.

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53. DISCIPLINARIAN

2nd OCTOBER, 1948

It was raining heavily early this morning; everyone thought that there would be no morning class. The Ashramite deputed to ring the bell thought it would be no use ringing the bell as there is no one to start the class. Sri Aravamudam was walking majestically along with a small bucket in his hand. When he noticed Siva he put down the bucket and bowed.

"No class today," queried Siva. "I am just now coming out of the Bhajan Hall, Swamiji. No one has come this morning." Quickly two or three students were collected. They started Kirtan; some more joined. The professors also came in.

Siva kept mum over the incident, till he came to the office. Quietly he introduced the topic, intending to instruct. "I looked out of my Kutir at 5. a.m. It was raining. Then I waited a little. The rain stopped. Then I went to the Bhajan Hall to find none there. Everyone thought that I could not come. Then when they all saw me they started gathering. It is all due to inborn laziness. Even if one man went there, he should start doing Kirtan. The story is told of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji who founded the Ramakrishna Mission that he will deliver his lectures at the scheduled time and place whether there were people to listen to him or not. It is because he had such an indomitable will that his Satsankalpa is working even now." Thus the Master

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instructs his students in calm and quiet ways. The effect is dynamic.

Luckily for us, late in the evening Shivadayalji had a talk with the saint regarding the attitude towards him of his room-mate, who was disturbing his books and belongings, upsetting his clothes, etc. And then fell from the lips the jems of wisdom: "Masterji you are daily reading Brahma Sutras and Vedanta. If at the same time you develop a heart of love also, he will serve you nicely. You must win him through your love. Then he will himself wash your clothes, fold them nicely and place them in your almirah. To conquer another man's heart you should develop many virtues, qualities like adaptability, humility, spirit of service, forbearance, and also subdue your ego completely. That is the fruit of your Vedantic studies. These petty matters should be adjusted among yourselves. Just imagine how much of my time is wasted in settling these petty quarrels. Settle these things amicably among yourselves. Radiate love and peace. Let there be no more misunderstanding. How often does the Sage proclaim that adaptability is the best of virtues.

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54. SHARP TONGUE

6th JANUARY, 1949

A Telugu Sadhak had a grievance. He came into the Office with a complaint against another inmate who had insulted him. Siva counselled for forbearance. Later it was pointed out to Siva by someone else that the offending party had a 'sharp tongue' in truth. But Master is always reflective. "Everybody has a sharp tongue. After all we are all human beings. But the beauty lies in controlling it. Before an offending word is uttered, you should introspect and check it. And even occasionally you happen to use the wrong expression; you should learn the art of smoothening the matter out at once. You should apologise to the man whom you have offended, talk to him sweetly and ask his pardon and pacify him. Gradually your very nature will be changed. Here lies the sanest prescription for sharp tongue. Try and see the results." Siva's own words are as sweet as honey.

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CHAPTER NINE

SIVANANDA: THE MASTER DIVIVE

55. WHAT A HEART!

23rd SEPTEMBER, 1956

Today in the verandah outside Siva's Kutir, a couch for the Saint has been artistically decorated by Vishnu Devji. Sri P. S. Natesa Iyer is to perform Pada-Puja to Siva this morning. The saint came in quietly and sat on a wooden plank placed on the floor. He would not sit on the decorated chair at any cost. "The simpler the better," was His calm reply to the various requests to occupy the decorated seat. The Puja was over. All along He sat gazing at the Ganges and the Himalayas in front entirely detaching himself from the physical sheath!

His inner consciousness was one with the universal consciousness—Para Brahman. Next item was food.

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Siva told Sri Govindaswamiji, "Narayan Swamiji, Venkatesanandaji sit down here by my side." The humble disciples hesitated. "Come on won't you sit down ?" "Swamiji, I shall serve and then take food." Accepted. As soon as he finished his meal, he went into the kitchen assured himself that there is food enough for all of them and would not leave the Kitchen till he was certain that they would take their food there. All the time Sri Vishnu Swamiji's eyes were rivetted on the decorated chair. "Wait !" Siva walked towards that chair : He sat on it. "This is all mere show. All this Puja and 'Vadapayasam' (some of the special food-preparation which always go with such occasions) only increase one's vanity. These things have started to invade me also. I am in the danger zone ! What do you say ?" What a grand joke ! Can Maya, vanity ever approach anywhere near the mighty, enlightened one. He has conquered Maya the terrible Dame, and she in shameful pain still lies panting at His feet.

Then the saint indulged in a little innocent fun regarding the Archana Mantras. "The Pundit who composed these should have consulted me ; I would then have given many more." And it is interesting and revealing to see the process of Pada-Puja offered to the saint. Along with others He also repeats all the Archana Mantras, and Guru Stotra ! It is apparent from his Divine behaviour that someone else is being worshipped through His medium, and so He too offers His worship and prayers at His glorious Lotus-Feet.

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56. THE SAINTLY HEART

12th DECEMBER, 1948

Sri R.P. Gandhi, a worker in Government Office, came into the office of Siva, bowed to Siva and narrated his tale of woe. He is a refugee from the Punjab. The partition had made him practically a beggar and he has received news that his bank has also failed. To add to the misery the whole family was sick due to the shock. And he made the request: "Swamiji, I have some good religious books. I wish to dispose of them as I am not able to make both ends meet, with the salary I am getting. I wonder if you will purchase some of these books." He showed the list which totalled Rs.68-12-0. Siva apparently scanned the list, but his mind was somewhere else. Most of the books were in the Ashram Library ; the others were unnecessary. He did not need them. "Does not matter". His compassion spoke addressing Venkatesanandaji, "Select some good books out of this list for half the amount. Premanandaji, get Rs. 40/-. Rs.30/- we shall give as the price for the books, and Rs.10/- as my humble donation.... Yes, merely purchasing books is not charity. I should also give him some money as a donation." Money came ; Siva reverentially handed it to him, "Patram, Pushpam..." And he was glad, he had helped a fellow-brother. Such opportunities he hunts for. One need only make a gesture and his help is ready in all matters. People of neighbourhood know it and take undue advantage. Some-

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one is ill and needs money for milk and fruits. Another is going to Badri and needs money for his journey expenses, some others simply beg without any reason, for they know refusal they cannot have from this God of Mercy and Love. Sometimes the saint is later reminded that the person who took money from him the other day was speaking ill of him somewhere, but nothing makes any impression on this Image of Detachment. He will grow his own great, Godly Way. Let others behave meanly!

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57. HE REVEALS HIS HEART !

17th DECEMBER, 1948

While discussing the principles of Divine Life Society, Siva said, "My ideal is service. I will therefore keep the doors of the Ashram open even to a rogue. I will take him in and try to mould his character on right lines. Through him I will serve humanity! In this service his heart also will get purified. I do not want to lose one worker. For, you see, this Ashram and Society started like a small mustard seed, and by God's Grace it has grown into a big institution now with branches all over the world. Thousands of aspirants are writing that they are benefited by our service..." Sri R.V. Sastri interrupted, "Yes, Swamiji. That is perfectly true. Sri Satchidananda Swamiji wrote to the All-India Congress Committee for a pass to join the congress session. The letter reached Sri Rajendra Prasad for sanction. Sri Rajan Babu noticed the name "Sivanandashram" on the top of the letter, and at once remarked "Oh, this Swami has written from Sivananda Ashram. They are doing very good work. There is no worry. Issue him a ticket." Sri K.S. Venkataramani was with Rajan Babu at that time, and Sri K.S.V. himself told me this incident."

"It is all due to His Grace," Siva continued, "we are merely instruments in His hands. We should always see in what ways we can promote the work, and we should avoid the evils that eat away the very root of the organisation. Jealousy, for

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instance, is a great evil which will prevent the growth of any institution. But it is a human vice. It is in everyone. It can be totally eradicated only when one attains Brahmajnana. But, what we should all strive to do is to cripple jealousy so that it is unable to work its way into the very vitals of our being. This can be done only through constant Vichara and Vairagya. When jealousy arises in the mind we should try to put it down and prevent it from taking positive shape. Anger is another evil. If you get angry towards anyone in the morning, in the noon you should do Vichara, and in the evening you should make proper amends, and become one with the other man. Always try to co-operate with all. Adapt yourself with the other men. Always try to co-operate with everyone and mix with all and work with all. The most important point is service. That should be your motto. Then everything will be all right. You should every moment feel: "How can I enable the Divine Life Message to reach thousands of more aspirants? Then gradually all evil qualities will leave you." This sincere spirit of service, this unbounded love for all humanity, this kindly maternal dealing with aspirants is the cause of the miraculous success of this wonderful institution! May it ever prosper!

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58. THE SAINT AND THE BULL

4th OCTOBER, 1948.

"Swamiji, you have built that Kutir on the very bank of the Ganges? What a nice shed? Is it for meditation purpose? But in rainy season it will be washed away by the Ganges!" Exclaimed the visitor seated in the Viswanath Ghat, gazing as he was towards Siva's Kutir, beyond which on the shore of the Ganges stood a small Kutir, a humble thatched shed.

"No, no, it is not a Kutir in the sense that you take it to be. It is indeed a Kutir; yes, and at present it houses an invalid—I shall explain it to you." And hie took the visitor to the Kutir, and what did he see there. An old emaciated bull in a dying condition. "My God....." exclaimed the visitor. He thought to see a Sadhak in meditation there! "Yes, you have just said it. It is your own God inside the Kutir! It is not meant to be a Kutir for a Sadhak to meditate in; but a Kutir to house an embodiment of God. Don't you see our God, in the bull too?"

The visitor seemed surprised. Two Ashramites were there attending on the bull. Like a regular Ashramite this bull was treated. Food, drink, shelter .....all comforts.....and all attention. And Siva was particular in His daily visits. The visitor was astonished to see all this: "This for a poor beast.....that an emaciated one, which we would long ago have driven out of the house as 'useless' (after having

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made the best use of its youth)....." Not so with the Saint: the bull which had served the Divine cause was just as useful and as much an object of his attention and affection as a human being who shares the good fortune. The bull breathed its last this evening, and under Siva's direction consigned to the Mother Ganges (as a Sannyasin is) with Maha Mantra Kirtan. The fortunate beast to serve the sacred cause of the saint, and to die at the foot of His Holy Kutir, and to get His affection and care! He must have attained Moksha, there is no doubt about it, and such is this wonderful Yogi; he fits perfectly in with the perfect description of a Yogi in the words of Lord Krishna, "One who looks with an equal eye, a dog, a low caste man, and a learned Brahmin." His cosmic love is proverbial; it just overflows towards one and all of His creation—yes, towards snakes, reptiles, and rats too! He cannot check it, this divine flow of love. That is why he is ever established in Ahimsa too! He cannot injure or see anyone injure even the tiniest creature. Even the life of a crawling small worm is as important as a man's.

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59. CHARITY HIS PASTIME !

7th JANUARY, 1949:

"Padmanabha Swamiji ! bring me one rupee worth of small coins. Write the amount as 'Charity.' Whenever I go out, I should have some small coins in my pocket. I see poor people on the road, but I have nothing to give them. I used in Malaya always to keep a lot of small change in my pocket and distribute them to the poor. That gives me a great joy and peace. Bring the coins at once."

Padmanabhaji soon brought some coins. "What is this ?" asked Siva, handling a half-anna coin "Half-anna ? I have never seen this. I do not have any occasion, because, I do not handle money. It is a funnily shaped coin ! Is it enough if I give a poor man only half-anna ? Why, will he get anything substantial for it ? Will it feed him ?" This heart Siva possesses—kind and loving and generous. He does not give merely as a duty that he has thrown a coin into the outstretched palm of the beggar, and his work is over. No, he does express the concern and love of a mother. "Will it suffice ?" If only we could imbibe this spirit ! O Merciful Master, fill our dry hearts with love and compassion. May we dream to be called thy disciples !

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60. THE PERFECT TEACHER

30th SEPTEMBER, 1948

Siva was very busy attending to the dispatch of free books. Suddenly he stopped, looked up: "From the time I got out of the morning class I have been going on thinking of writing a few poems, but I do not find time. I am doing this work; but my mind is still working on the poems. Only when I finish the poems will my mind know rest?" And he continued "Are you all keeping a note-book to record your thoughts?" He asked his disciples around Him, "First of all you should note down in this book all the new points that you learnt in the class. Then there are parallel ideas that might strike; or ideas arising out of those, expressed by others in the class. These should at once be noted down. Are you keeping such note-books?" Some of the students nodded assent; others professed to maintain a Vedantic unaffected coolness and silence. The Master went on, "There is one special advantage in this. First you will hear some good points. Then you will go on thinking about them. These will give rise to other good points in you. When you start one thing then down they will grow. This will become a habit with you. You will always dwell on sublime thoughts. The mind will refuse to come down, even if invited to. This is Vedantic Sravan-Manan-Nididhyasan! Side by side with this you should keep another note-book for introspection. That is intended to eradicate the

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negative qualities in you. Killing out the evil, on the one hand, and giving birth to divine thoughts and feelings on the other. Rapid progress is possible only then. When one good thought arises in the mind, say the importance of truth, you must dwell on the glory of truth, the lives of great men who have adhered to truth, the nature of truth, the pit-falls and snares on the path of truth, the obstacles that have to be overcome, the subtle ways of the mind, which deceives you and takes you along a side-track to falsehood—then dive into the mind and find out in what form falsehood lurks in your own mind, in gross or subtle form. Drive it out from there. Record the evil tendencies that you note in yourself. If a man does this he will soon find out the easy road to constant introspection. He will even live an inner life. There will be no time for the mind to externalise. He will never think of others. He will have no evil thoughts. Lust, anger, greed, etc., will die a natural death. He will not care if anyone spoke ill of him, if someone refused to give him milk or food, or if anyone criticised him. There will be no time for his mind to think of all these." What valuable teachings, worth being written in letters of gold, and what scientific way to deal with the minutest details. The blessed students !

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61. AWAKENING OF KUNDALINI
21st JANUARY, 1949

After the morning class was over Siva went to Sri S.'s room. He was still in bed; fast asleep. Siva remarked: "S.! I think your Kundalini needs awakening by a new and special kind of Tadana Kriya. I should take a small stick and give a few good 'Tadanas' so that the Shakti in you may get awakened. At present it lies so dormant that no one can detect life in you. You are so young and yet so lazy. I have requested you so often to attend the class; you have never cared to listen. Even though you are in the next room you do not attend the Kirtan in the Office! You are slowly becoming a 'Thahappan Swami' I think!" And then turning to others Siva said, "There are various methods of awakening Kundalini, through Hatha Yogic Kriyas, through Pranayama, through Vichara, through Guru's Grace, through devotion, through selfless service, etc. There is a special Shakti-sanchar Kriya, a Tadana Kriya. This method of Tadana has a special value. My Tadana Kriya is an entirely new method. It consists of taking a good stick and giving a mild caning! Then Kundalini will get awakened, and the aspirant will be brisk. "Thahappan Swami' is a Tamil expression: it is one of the names of Lord Subramanya, who became Lord's Teacher! It literally means 'Father's Guru."

A unique way of teaching. Humour and admonition side by side. It has a magical effect on a receptive mind.

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62. HE IS BEYOND DAY AND DATE

2nd OCTOBER, 1948.

As Siva moved out of the Bhajan Hall, he remembered the Appayya Jayanti which is celebrated every year. "O, Venkateswarji, when is Appayya Jayanti this year" "Swamiji, it is already over on the 19th September." "Is that so?" "But you did not tell us at all. Everyone forgot all about it. All right. It does not matter. We shall celebrate it on the next full-moon day. Narayan Swamiji, please note it in your diary. Only then will we remember it without fail. We shall read some of Appayya's works, his commentary on the Sutras, and there can also be discourses on his life, etc."

From this, we can find how Siva lives in the world! To him nothing matters really. Days and dates, ceremonies and celebrations don't exist for him. He has to do nothing. He has done all. He has achieved all. He works for our sake. Lokasangraha is his motive, for in the words of Lord Krishna, the Liberated Man has to set an example. So he has to take to service; otherwise he ever rests in his own Satchidananda Swarupa, beyond the activities of this world. And in the evening, after the Satsang had concluded he was distributing Prasad to Swami X. He offered a second course of Prasad. "It is your birthday, take more," as he turned round to another Sadhak, "Is it your birthday also." "No, Swamiji" came the honest reply. Siva turned to a third: "Today is indeed your birthday. What is

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there, today is everyone's birthday! Everyday is your birthday!" Saintly language indeed! At once simple and difficult to understand. He stands on the threshold. He sees this world and that world, too.

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63. HIS LOVE FOR TULSI AND TRADITION

15th JANUARY, 1949

A doctor from Malaya has arrived. After the due greetings, he said "Swamiji, I had the rarest good fortune of living in the same bungalow that was previously occupied by your Holiness."

"Is that so?" enquired Siva with childlike curiosity. "And Swamiji, the Tulsi that you planted outside is still worshipped, and every day till I left Malaya I used to light lamps placed around the Peetham."

"Yes, yes, soon after I left that place, Dr. Parsons used to tell me every time he visited the place that the Tulsi-Altar was being maintained. I am very glad to hear that."

The topic drifted.

"Swamiji! You know well that no one in Malaya, especially among those who have gone from here, was free from some of these evils—wine, women, and tobacco. All over Malaya you alone have acquired the unique name of having been the single person who was untouched by these evils. It is a great marvel." No wonder I think, coming events cast their shadow before. The saint had the seeds of saintliness in his very childhood. The spirit of selfless service, universal love, and loftiness of vision were ingrained in his very blood. Born in the family of saints, he was born-saint. His life as a doctor in Malaya was only an introduction to his future life of regular renunciation.

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64. MODERN RAMANUJA

12th OCTOBER, 1948

"This will create a Samskara in them; and it may take deeper root now itself or at least in the next birth. Let them all hear the great Mantras. Why make a great fuss about it: say that the initiation will cost the Sadhaka a couple of thousands of rupees, great austerities, etc." said Siva as he was leaving Bhajan Hall after Vijaya Dasami Celebrations. Suddenly Siva thought of repeating for all those assembled to follow—the Mahavakyas, Sri Vidya Mantra, Navakshara Mantra, of Durga and many others. The Divine idea in this strange kind of initiation was that anyone who had a liking for any of the Mantras may treat it sacred initiation ceremony and start repeating the Mantras! Exactly what Ramanuja did—shouting the Ashtakshari from the top of a temple tower. And it is characteristic of Siva—this willing spirit of initiation. You have not to request him twice for a Mantra. I have seen saints who usually don't initiate at any cost, and if at all they do, it is a great favour, after much requesting, pleading and prayers. But here the Saint is more willing than the Sadhaka. He is glad beyond measure to think and feel that one of his children at least is resolving to go on the right path. His helping hand is ever there to help you—to lead you up—on the right path. No delay in initiation! He does it immediately. And he infuses faith too with his frequent words of assurance. The Shastriji who was

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in charge of Durga Puja was distributing Prasad and in doing so also sprinkled the Holy Kalasa-water on all present. Just then Siva remarked "This is equal to one Asvamedha Sacrifice nowadays. This is the greatest ritualistic Yajna that can be performed in these days." And he called out everyone to receive the Holy Prasad. No need to say that such words of authority and assurance coming from the sacred lips of a Self-realized Sage work wonders on the minds of masses. Great Narada has said in his 'Bhakti Sutras,' "These great ones (like our Siva) alone give Shastra its authority."

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65. UNIVERSAL FRIEND
22nd JANUARY, 1949.

The commissioner of Pauri has come escorted by Sri Gouri Prasadji, retired judge and the Mahant of Swarga Ashram. After bowing to Siva he occupied the chair opposite. Siva at once called forth Vishnu Swamiji and Padmanabhan and gave them the usual instructions of hospitality. One brought fruits and tea, the other brought books for presentation. Siva offered to the visitors Prasad for body and soul, and while handing over the Asan-Chart, he asked "Will you practise them?" "Sure, yes, Swamiji, I shall try." Then after a few minutes the Commissioner turned towards the Office. He seemed to be astonished: "This is your Office?" Judge Saheb explained: "Yes: it is Swamiji's office. You see, it is here that the innumerable books, magazines, pamphlets, and leaflets and letters are produced. Swamiji has flooded the world with spiritual literature!" Then the Commissioner was shown round the temple, Bhajan Hall, Guha, etc. And the official took leave expressing admiration at the wonderful work that the Saint was doing silently and dynamically. For Him no one is a stranger; all faces are familiar—friends. For a newcomer—the Commissioner, too was received as though a long-known bosom friend. Siva is concerned about him too. He gets the assurance too from him that he will practise Asanas. He gave him the Asan Chart, but his duty was not over there and so he got the promise too, "Yes, Swamiji, I shall try."

SIVANANDA

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66. A FORM OF DIVINE GRACE

30th JANUARY, 1949

The bell had gone, announcing that the food was ready. All assembled in the Divine Hall, when to the surprise of everyone, Siva came to the spot, "All of you should sing the Maha Mantra today for fifteen minutes before food is served. Today Sri Rajan Mohan Chakravarti is perfoming the Shraddha of his departed wife : left us all pray for the peace of the departed soul." This was done. Siva had received a letter from Rajani Babu, describing his wife's last moments : "At about 4-45 a.m. I was alone sitting at her bed and praying. I had a vision of your Divine Self appearing before me, and I placed her at your feet, and then she peacefully passed away. So I know that you have given her shelter in thy lotus-Feet. I am satisfied."

And it was at this lucky soul that Siva had the Kirtan performed. The bereaved husband, the perfect devotee of Siva, wrote further, "I think it is the will of the Lord to free me from worldly attachments, so that I may devote more time to His Service. You know best. I am resigned to thy will." Siva's Grace showers in torrents on such sincere, surrendering souls!

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67. THE LIVING SPIRIT OF THE GITA !

11th JANUARY, 1949

Today is Vaikuntha Ekadasi. Swami Ramanandaji who has been suffering from Astma for some weeks past quietly passed away early in the morning. The end was sudden and unexpected. He engaged himself in work till the last day. Siva was informed, but he did not show much concern when the body was taken out for giving the bath. Siva came on to the scene and was struck by the calm face: "He does not even show any signs of death. Don't be hasty: first give some artificial respiration, administer a couple of injections; make sure that he is not merely in a swoon." Sadhaks rushed for the task. Two people rubbed Ramanandaji's feet with Liniment Turpentine; two administered artificial respiration. Let go the hand. Ramanandaji's hand fell on the ground just touching Siva's foot. After sometime it was declared that life had gone from the body. "All right, now say Krishna-Bhagawan-ki-jai!" said Siva, and the last rites were performed. Siva himself poured a vesselful of water over the body, with Panchakshari Kirtan. Someone talked about Ramanandaji: how very quietly he passed away on such an auspicious day, without causing any inconvenience to anyone, and working up to the last moment, etc., etc. Quick came Siva's reply: "Why! his entire life was most exemplary. He was a pure Vedantin. He never had any connection with his Poorvashram family after he came here. He never hankered after

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any comforts or food. He never interfered with anyone else. He had led a perfect life. He had convened three Divine Life Conferences in Rangoon and one religious conference. He has rendered great service to humanity. What more do you want?" Someone then remarked, "Swamiji! he has always been saying that even if he had to die, he would prefer it to occur at Swamiji's Feet and that he would never leave the Ashram whatever be the physical inconvenience." And the boon had been granted. The Master had seen to the last rites of his beloved disciple. His way is clear. Moksha is certain for him! And it is worth marking that though he is unconcerned for a dead disciple, he is all attentive to the living one. Every effort was made to see if the life still existed in the body. The saint is a living spirit of the Gita.

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68. LIFE IN RISHIKESH : A GREAT BLESSING

Early in 1954, a cook came to Rishikesh. He had no intention of staying in the Ashram permanently. But Siva welcomed him most affectionately and surprised him by the kind suggestion : "Please stay here itself. You can open a hotel in the neighbourhood. I will do all that I can to encourage you." He called the Secretary of the Ashram and told him to give the cook a loan and the necessary vessels to start his business. Addressing the cook the saint went on : "You can take food in the Ashram and carry on your business, for your own profit."

A little later, Siva clarified his attitude by revealing : "It is a blessing to live here on the banks of the Ganges, in Rishikesh. Some day, he might get an aspiration to renounce the world. Till then it is good to encourage him even in his ambition to earn money. First make him stay here ; then slowly convert him to Sadhana !"

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69. EQUAL VISION : AN INBORN TRAIT

It happened in 1920 or so when Siva was in Malaya as a prosperous doctor. He had a cook Narasimha Iyer. To Siva (then Dr. Kuppuswamy) he was more than a brother. One day Siva went over to the studio to have a photograph taken. When that was done, he noticed on young Narasimha Iyer's countenance an unexpressed eagerness—to have a similar picture of himself. Instantly Siva gave him his own suit, bow and collar, etc., and instructed the photographer to have a picture of Narasimha Iyer taken that way.

Not a word passed between them : but everyone understood the supreme lesson—One Self dwells in all: all mankind is but one family, children of the same Lord.

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70. SUPREME COSMIC IDENTIFICATION

Siva was at Swarg Ashram. An aged Sadhu suddenly took ill and his condition was serious. He had to be taken to Lucknow to be admitted in the Hospital there. People were afraid of infection: and the foul-smelling discharges forbade even the stout at heart from approaching the patient very near. But Siva was ready! He volunteered to take charge of the old Sadhu.

Siva had to carry the Sadhu on his own shoulders. He had no fear of infection: nor would he shrink away from natural discharges. He had completely identified himself with the patient. With great love and consideration, he took the Swami to Lucknow and had him admitted in the Hospital there.

Even today he says significantly: "I live to serve you all." There is no one in the world—however wicked or vicious—who in his view does not deserve his service!

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STORY OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

[*Extracts from Sri Sobha's letters to Swami Sivananda*]

Thy Grace turns Poison into Nectar

"O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!"—when I repeat this prayer of Sri Gurudev, I think of Gurudev and Gurudev alone, for there is no other God for me. How can I ever thank Gurudev enough for his infinite gifts. Spellbound with utmost love and faith I ever repeat thy Holy Name—auspiciousness and bliss. What else can one desire?

The other day I received the precious gifts: Chyavanaprash and the oil. With reverence I bowed to them. They came from my God. Ever since you asked me to take Chyavanaprash, I am taking it most regularly as your Prasad, the first thing in the morning. The wonder of wonders is that I have also started taking milk which I never used to do; for, I have to take it with Chyavanaprash and while gulping down the liquid, I think of you and this way it tastes like nectar. I am sure Gurudev, thinking of you, I could even take poison and with a smile too; with thy sweet name on my lips I will find it sweet.

And I am drinking daily doses of poison from the cup of life—and I even try to smile, for if you so will—as great is thy Glory and Grace—it may even turn into nectar. I depend entirely on your infinite mercy and unconditional kindness.

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The precious "*Symposium on Sivananda's Palm*" book to hand. What a treasure. Turn two leaves and take Darshan of thy Sacred Feet. How I love these lovely lotuses. May they ever crown my head! A few pages more, and Gurudev's Holy Hand, which I kiss with love and reverence and the contents of the book—the readings are most wonderful; they are all true when I read the expositions of these palmists, I feel they have stolen words from my lips. Writing of devotion, these lucky souls have held thy Holy Hand!

You alone know Lord! What you are! How can we mortals fathom thy endless depths. Give me the vision to see thee, the wisdom to know thee, and the way to reach thee!

* * *

Thy Feet: Fountain of virtue

Dear Gurudev,

Thy kind letter containing thy gracious instructions regarding the diary. Yes, Gurudev, I did not meditate on the virtues! Now I shall make it a point to do so daily. So far, I used to meditate on Thy lotus-Feet only, yes, for me everything is contained in them. Bless me Gurudev. Shower thy grace on this thy most worthless child. May I conquer my mind, the deadliest foe! By your blessings alone I can tame it, the most turbulent beast. I am most incapable Gurudev, weak and unworthy. As I have written in one of my poems 'surrender is my only art.' Good or bad I am thine!

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Don't forsake me, Saviour. Herewith a few poems, written on you as my humble love-offering. Accept it my Lord !

My prostrations to all my brothers and sisters there !

Ever at thy Feet,
The Dust of thy Feet,
Sivananda-Sobha.

Thy Letter : Food for my Soul

Sweetest Gurudev,

My only support, strength, and solace ! Supreme Saviour in the stormy sea of life. My Enternal prostrations at thy lotus-like Holy Feet. Accept them, my Lord and bless me with undying calm, peace and quiet. Let the faint, feeble Spark of this life merge in the eternal effulgence in serenity and silence. No more storms, Saviour !

Just now I have received the shower of thy grace in the form of the most precious gift—thy letter; always a rare treasure and treat for my starved soul. Yet, it is ever starving for thy love. The more you feed it the more is its hunger. Strange indeed !

The other day I sent you a letter and along with it a few poems. Today I am sending some more. You should not be bored, Gurudev, for it is only you who write through this little medium. I am only an instrument. I don't write. They just come and I can't help it. I can stop when you stop. I feel like a storm within—uncontrollable and till I put

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it on paper I am not pacified. So please excuse me and forgive my feeble and frail attempts at describing thy infinite glory and grandeur. I take refuge in thy immortal compassion and undying forgiveness.

Just now I have received the *Yoga-Vedanta Forest University Weekly*. Hungrily I gulped through it all, as it contained Sister Chellamm's article. How superb her style! I wish to run to her and congratulate her in person, but my soul has already done so. My prostrations at her feet. I always miss her. She is so kind and loving.

Hope, this finds you, Gurudev, in the best of spirits and 'wonderful health'. Thy resplendence is required eternally to illumine our dark and difficult paths. Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya!

One with the Dust of thy Lotus Feet.

Ever at thy Feet,
Sivananda-Sobha.

Thy Life: Our Scripture

Dear Guru Dev,

How can I ever thank you for the kind letter, with Prasad of Kumkum, Chyavanaprash, the hair oil and so many books? And with my eyes lowered and in a meek and modest tone I must also thank Thee for the 'Titles', as I do not deserve them. But whatever you give, that I must accept with a happy heart, throbbing with love and eternal gratitude.

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I am neither a Poet, Guru Dev, nor a writer—just the happy and lucky dust of thy Lotus-Feet, for no one can now separate me from them. Graciously you have enquired if I want more books, but, Gurudev the world knows that it is your custom to give more than what is needed. So your devotees can never be in want of anything—no, not even your love, for that too you give in abundance.

Gurudev, did you like the "Divine Descent"—your life? I like it more than *Philosophy and teachings*. Your life is full of nectar and honey and all that is divine and noble and good. All the teachings, and wisdom and philosophy are contained in it alone. We need not look anywhere else; for us, thy devotees, everything is contained in Thy Lotus-feet.

How impatiently I am waiting for the auspicious day, the blessed 8th September. If you grant Gurudev, I shall reach the abode of Bliss on the 27th August—a day before Janmashtami; quite alone this time (not quite alone though,—you are always with me) i.e. children do not have holidays. They all send you prostrations

Hope this finds my Gurudev in perfect health.

In eternal prostration,

—Sobha.

Thy Breath: Our Life

Dearest Gurudev,

The Dispeller of darkness, Bestower of bliss, strength of the weak, and the Joy of the joyless, Support of the entire Universe; I cling to thy

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Lotus-Feet in utter surrender and kiss them with reverence, love and devotion. You are the cause of our salvation; your very existence means death to the dark forces of nature. Sheltered by thy blissful Feet we are safe and secure. For us, thy Devotees, you are all in all. Thy precious pain-alleviating breath alone is life for us. May you ever live to keep us alive.

Thy letter, Gurudev, the best nourishment for my starving soul illumined and enlivened my entire being. The Divine words saturated with the unique godly spirit of compassion and kindness, the footstool which gives me support, took me to the heavenly realms above very near thy own eternal abode. Blissful tears fell from my eyes like a refreshing shower and Divine ecstasy filled my every veins. With my treasure in hand, I sat speechless overwhelmed by thy benevolent nature full of love and kindness. Support of the whole world, who can even dream of offering support to you? But I earnestly and honestly crave to serve Thee. My soul, heart, mind and body anxiously await Thy orders. Thy slightest gesture is the greatest command for me. God has put me in such circumstances that I cannot serve you in any way, but according to your command when I serve everyone I feel that I am really serving you—for you pervade all. It gives me great relief.

Gurudev, I can write quite a number of poems (when I am away from you, they just come out, I

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don't compose). I have also written your life and teachings in poetry, but I am afraid lest I should bore you with my dull and prosaic poetry; but Lord of Love ! You are concerned only with our Bhav and devotion.....

In eternal prostrations,
Ever at thy Feet,
Sobha.

Thy Will Prompts Our Thought

Sweetest Gurudev,

Today is Holy Guru Poornima. My heart is full; but silence is thy language. So words are futile. moreover you dwell in my heart. You are the prompter of every thought ! But I cannot help sending this Flower Offering that just dropped out of my heart, and is eager to touch thy Lotus Feet :—

Guru Poornima ! Oh, the sacred-day
Alas, my body finds no way
To reach the heaven where Guru Dev dwells
I am tied in bonds too unbreakable.
I see in my imagination
All the scenes of celebration
My Lord, seated on His throne
Fragrant flowers at His Feet are strewn
In sacred saffron robes He seems
Spirit-Supreme, face bright with beams
Holy and High and Heavenly
Marjestic, modest and mannerly
Lucky souls are paying homage
At the Feet of this celestial sage

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He sits like an image of compassion
Receiving prayers and prostration
Last of all goes my soul
To touch His Feet—my prop and pole
But what to offer ? all is Thine,
My soul too is not mine.
So in silence there it lay
It had nothing to give or say.

—SOBHA.

Thy Feet are my Crown

Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya,

Lord ! Be gracious to accept from this humble devotee, just wild flowers, but drenched with the dew drops of deepest devotion and love.

Guru Poornima is approaching. Fortunate ones will worship thee. My soul is always there and you know it. Your transcendent glance cannot but see my subtle form that ever follows your Lotus-feet, like a humble servant.

In spirit I am ever there with you, in Venkatesanandaji's room, office and Satsang ; I bow to you and take Prasad as usual. My head ever resting under your Lotus Feet. Your compassion cannot kick it away. My head even enjoys the sacred, pure, pressure of thy Holy Feet. I feel it—the sacred touch. It inspires and elevates me to Heavenly heights.

In all sincerity I ask of Thee One boon. You never disappoint a Devotee. May all my years be added to Thy pure, perfect, precious life ! This pious prayer comes straight from my soul and your loving heart cannot ignore or reject it.

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Along with it my master! I most reverentially and lovingly send my humble homage, love and devotion—and will you accept not, My Lord! this pure innocent worship, which springs from the soul, and "Heavens reject not"?

The Eternal Prostration.

Ever at Thy Feet,
The Dust of Thy Feet,
—Sivananda-Sobha.

Thy Shoes: Highest Object of My Worship

Dearest Gurudev,

The eternal refuge of thy Devotees: Thy compassionate, loving heart is the safe sure shelter for those fallen; but fortunate are the souls who can surrender themselves unconditionally at thy most Holy, blissful lotus-feet. Though utterly devoid of delight, deserted, and destitude I deem them the luckiest, who come and beg at Thy door, who can fall at thy feet. and who can cling to the Dust that has once touched the highest object of my worship—Thy shoes. For limitless is thy mercy and uncompared flows thy love. So whoever comes to you as a beggar goes back as a king. Silently you work wonders. All cannot see thee or know thee, for such is thy will.

Thy letter, Gurudev; my most precious treasure I received yesterday. What divine joy and peace, and bliss you sent with it I need not tell you, for it will be foolish and even superfluous Gurudev. I

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am even holding thy Holy Lotus-feet. I am however concerned that I might not be hurting those soft, lovely lotuses by my constant grasp. But I cannot help it. They are my only support in the raging and stormy sea of Samsara. If I leave them for a second I am afraid I may lose my balance, and have a fatal fall.

Obviously enough I feel no love towards my blood-relations. They seem strangers, and they are disgusted with me. A strange, sacred, sense of oneness unites me with all those who are your devotees. Would that the whole world could worship you—then I would love all. Not till all love you, can I love all. You won't appreciate the spirit I am sure; but then I can help it.

The Holiest and the most auspicious day Guru-poornima is approaching fast. The earthen frame that is here will celebrate the occasion with all the due devotion that it deserves, but my spirit is ever there clinging to thy lotus feet, so it will witness all the sacred performances and the grand worship of thy Holy Feet, that shall take place in the "Abode of Bliss". Please do not forget to bless me with thy Holy Prasad for I am all along there visible only to your Divine eyes.

Physically I must live apart from You. For such is thy will and I must submit to it in perfect surrender.

In Eternal Prostration

One with the Dust of thy lotus-feet

—Sivananda-Sobha.

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Received your kind letter. The words of wisdom had the effect of a soothing bal : on my aching soul. I am all thanks. O, my Lord! Bhagavan Sivananda, most merciful master, I have nothing to offer at thy holy lotus-feet; but every breath that I am breathing is an offering unto you, every movement of my limbs is perambulation round thy Divine Form, every word that I utter is a Stotra in thy praise. My very life is a humble offering at the sacred shrine of thy holy lotus-feet, accept it my Lord. Most unholy and full of errors as I am, I am thine alone. O Asutosh Lord, I have fallen at thy feet in total surrender. Be gracious, O Lord, shower thy mercy on me. Too powerful and mysterious is Maya. It has overpowered me completely. Save me from the terrible enchantress. Save me from her grip. Come Saviour, protect thy helpless child. I have great faith in thy powers and wisdom and glory. Thou art an ocean of compassion—kind and forgiving. I have one desire my Lord! May my unworthy head serve as the footstool for thy holy lotus-feet, for ever and ever. I envy the happy lot of thy shoes. My spirit is ever clinging to thy holy lotus-feet. I am ever thine. You must know it, Gurudev, for thy eyes penetrate deeper than the spirit. Shower thy grace on me, Master, though I deserve it not, but great is thy love and it knows no limits. Crores of prostrations to thy Divine Holy Feet. How to thank for the lovely locket I don't know. It has become one with my life. It is

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the only ornament that. I love. Thanks from the very depths of the soul.

—Sivananda-Sobha,
Bareilly.

Thy Lotus-Feet : A Fountain of Bliss

My mind and soul are always at thy feet. At Dehra Dun I had some slight solace that I was near you but today as I have reached Bareilly even that little consolation has gone.

In fact my soul is ever clinging to thy lotus-feet. How can a body be without soul. Your kind loving motherly heart will not let you sit silent. You cannot be an indifferent witness to my mental misery. Kindly call me near you, sweetest Gurudev. If I am at Rishikesh I can at least daily see you. I am ever thinking of you and I cannot help it. If ever I am asked to go to Rishikesh every nerve of my body will shine with life, every fibre of my being will sing in joy.

Your sympathetic heart will force you to shower peace and bliss on thy unhappy child. I want nothing but peace so that I may be able to meditate on thy Divine Form.

These days I am ever dreaming of the most auspicious, the most blessed the happiest day—the 8th September. Kindest father, please call me at Thy lotus-feet on that holy happy occasion. I must get my due share of happiness and bliss which ever gushes forth in incessant flow from Thy lotus-feet. I am living in the hope of receiving that Divine Light.

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My love and adorations to all the happy and blessed souls who surround thee and who are lucky enough to serve thee.

In Eternal prostration before thy Divine Form.

—Sivananda-Sobha,
Bareilly.

The sweet remembrances of Sri Gurudev and the holy place are always in my heart. I desire to leave home and everything and go to some place of *ekant* for doing some Sadhana and then come to Swamiji's Lotus-feet to serve him and through His Holiness, to serve the humanity.

—B. N. Tankha,
Bareilly.

STORY OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Select opinions regarding Sri Sivananda-Sobha's masterly work SIVANANDA: THE WORLD SAVIOUR, Published recenily by The Yoga-Vedanta Forest University.

I enjoyed reading 'World Saviour', the book written by Shobha Tankha. Revered Swami Sivanandaji seems to have changed her life and her mentality altogether. It is a great blessing to be near to such a blessed and great soul as Swami Sivanand Ji Maharaj I am grateful for your sending these books to me for they inspire me and show me the path to a better life.

—Srimati Rameshwari Nehru
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Sri Sobha, nay Sri Sivananda-Sobha' book "Sivananda, the World Saviour" I relished beyond description. It gave me no satiation till I had made three revisions of it, and I still want to go through it over and over again during my leisure hours. Wonderful indeed! The book contains a treasure of the highest standard of spiritual wisdom and an unfathomable devotional homage to the Master. I have no words to pay her any tribute in befitting language. It is, as she has herself expressed, all due to the blessings she has received from Gurudev and to whom she has so beautifully attributed everything. The book, when closely and carefully gone through, seems as if pouring down a shower of Absolute Bliss from Heavens so far as Bhakti Yoga is concerned. I wish to go on paying my humble tribute to the worthy writer if it is not a question of space and time, at present. Our Gurudev has himself said in this regard. "I shall get an elephant. Sobha will ride on it and I shall blow the conch" a condescention from the World Saviour which she so richly deserves.

—G. B. Saxena,
District Supply Office
Aligarh

I have just finished Sri Sobha's book "SIVANANDA: THE WORLD SAVIOUR." It is definitely one of the best books brought out by the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University. What I like about it is that it contains more of your thought on life and its

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problems than her thoughts about you. It is saturated with Bhakti without being sentimental. She has presented the great truths with the simplicity and force they deserve. This book ought to be widely read.

—Dr. Lakshmi Mirchandani,
Hazaribag

To

Sri Sivananda Sobha.

Blessed and blissful noble soul,

Prostrations and salutations.

I cannot help thanking you for the great service you have done to us by bringing out a beautiful volume on the life and teachings of the great Gurudev. Songs on Swamiji fill our heart with ecstasy and rapture. Your own poems give me words to voice my feelings of heart towards the kind and benevolent saviour of the fallen and the weak. Your book SIVANANDA: THE WORLD SAVIOUR has very kindly been sent to me with the blessings of Swamiji. The book is a guide, friend and philosopher and is a replica of the great master. It also reveals your sincere devotion to the Swami and the purity and greatness of your soul. Hope you will continue to guide us through your sincere and noble example and help us gain the permanent bliss and joy that is our Gurudev,

With regards,

—Raghuraj Singh,
Hardoi

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the only ornament that I love. Thanks from the very depths of the soul.

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problems than her thoughts about you. It is saturated with Bhakti without being sentimental. She has presented the great truths with the simplicity and force they deserve. This book ought to be widely read.

— Dr. Lakshmi Mirchandani,
Hazaribag

To

Sri Sivananda Sobha.

Blessed and blissful noble soul,

Prostrations and salutations.

I cannot help thanking you for the great service you have done to us by bringing out a beautiful volume on the life and teachings of the great Gurudev. Songs on Swamiji fill our heart with ecstasy and rapture. Your own poems give me words to voice my feelings of heart towards the kind and benevolent saviour of the fallen and the weak. Your book SIVANANDA: THE WORLD SAVIOUR has very kindly been sent to me with the blessings of Swamiji. The book is a guide, friend and philosopher and is a replica of the great master. It also reveals your sincere devotion to the Swami and the purity and greatness of your soul. Hope you will continue to guide us through your sincere and noble example and help us gain the permanent bliss and joy that is our Gurudev,

With regards,

—Raghuraj Singh,
Hardoi

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I am blessed indeed to receive a copy of the book "Sivananda the World Saviour" by Srimati Sivananda-Sobha. I read the book almost immediately on its receipt and bowed mentally before Sobha many a time. She is really blessed. I wish, if it is not inconvenient to send me for observance and guidance a copy of her spiritual diary that earned first prize from you. All the letters printed in the book are elevating and I look forward to the day, just as she has expressed in many of her letters, to the receipt of a handwritten letter (Gospel) from your Holiness.

—K. Audivarahan,
Assistant Engineer, P.W.D.,
KARAIKUDI

Book Review

Sivananda—The World Saviour: By Shrimati Sivananda-Sobha. Published by the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, Ananda Kutir, Sivananda Nagar, P. O. Rishikesh, Himalayas. Price Rs. 2.

This is Series No. 4. of the ensuing Platinum Jubilee or the Seventieth Birthday of Sri Swami Sivananda of the Holy Rishikesh on the 8th of September next, narrating the various aspects of the Swamiji's life from birth and till now by one born in the same Gotra as the Swamiji (The Bharadwaja Gotra). While the back cover glorifies the authoress, a lady of supreme devotion in all her spheres of householding, the pages from cover to cover unravel the scenes of the Swamiji's life

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from Pattamadi to Rishikesh or from Malaya to Mount Himalayas. The reader is interestingly led along by-paths chasms, gulping valleys, mountain fastnesses, rivers and shadows of plants, trees, and animals—with which the present—day Sage of Divine Life had some fellowship and association in his life's sojourn up to date. In a word, the whole book is a glorification of a spiritual genius that is busy with transforming the world's material delinquents and that in a way, demands recognition by virtue of a "Divine Right" of a "Divine" Life in this mortal world. This is a veritable thesaurus of a troubadour of spiritual mesmeristic phrenology.

The Wednesday Review
15 August, 1956.

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